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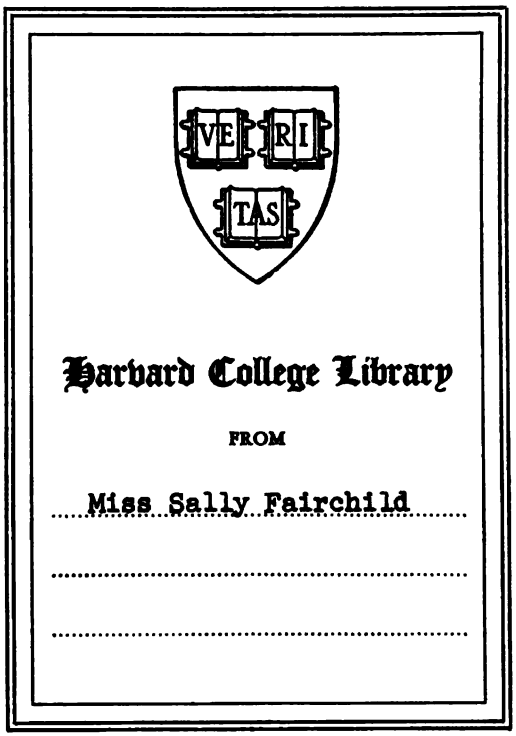
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THE

WORKS OF EDMUND BURKE.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

BOSTON:

CHARLES C. LITTLE AND JAMES BROWN.

MDCCCXXXIX.

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SUBSTANCE

OF THE

SPEECH IN THE DEBATE ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1790.

COMPREHENDING

A DISCUSSION OF THE SITUATION

OF

AFFAIRS IN FRANCE.

SUBSTANCE OF THE SPEECH.

Mr. Burke's speech on the report of the army estimates has not been correctly stated in some of the public papers. It is of consequence to him not to be misunderstood. The matter which incidentally came into discussion is of the most serious importance. It is thought that the heads and substance of the speech will answer the purpose sufficiently. If in making the abstract, through defect of memory, in the person who now gives it, any difference at all should be perceived from the speech as it was spoken, it will not, the editor imagines, be found in any thing which may amount to a retraction of the opinions he then maintained, or to any softening in the expressions in which they were conveyed.

Mr. Burke spoke a considerable time in answer to various arguments which had been insisted upon by Mr. Grenville and Mr. Pitt, for keeping an increased peace establishment, and against an improper jealousy of the ministers, in whom a full confidence, subject to responsibility, ought to be placed, on account of their knowledge of the real situation of affairs; the exact state of which it frequently happened, that they could not disclose, without violating the constitutional and political secrecy, necessary to the wellbeing of their country.

Mr. Burke said in substance, That confidence might become a vice, and jealousy a virtue, according to circumstances. That confidence, of all public virtues, was the most dangerous, and jealousy in a house of commons, of all public vices, the

most tolerable; especially where the number and the charge of standing armies, in time of peace, was the question.

That in the annual mutiny bill, the annual army was declared to be for the purpose of preserving the balance of power in Europe. The propriety of its being larger or smaller depended, therefore, upon the true state of that balance. If the increase of peace establishments demanded of parliament agreed with the manifest appearance of the balance, confidence in ministers, as to the particulars, would be very proper. If the increase was not at all supported by any such appearance, he thought great jealousy might, and ought to be, entertained on that subject.

That he did not find, on a review of all Europe, that politically, we stood in the smallest degree of danger from any one state or kingdom it contained; nor that any other foreign powers than our own allies were likely to obtain a considerable preponderance in the scale.

That France had hitherto been our first object, in all considerations concerning the balance of power. The presence or absence of France totally varied every sort of speculation relative to that balance.

That France is, at this time, in a political light, to be considered as expunged out of the system of Europe. Whether she could ever appear in it again, as a leading power, was not easy to determine: but at present he considered France as not politically existing; and most assuredly it would take up much time to restore her to her former active existence—*Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*, might possibly be the language of the rising generation. He did not mean to deny that it was our duty to keep our eye on that nation, and to regulate our preparation by the symptoms of her recovery.

That it was to her *strength*, not to her *form of government*, which we were to attend; because republics, as well as monarchies, were susceptible of ambition, jealousy, and anger, the usual causes of war.

But if, while France continued in this swoon, we should go

on increasing our expenses, we should certainly make ourselves less a match for her, when it became our concern to arm.

It was said, that as she had speedily fallen, she might speedily rise again. He doubted this. That the fall from an height was an accelerated velocity; but to lift a weight up to that height again was difficult, and opposed by the laws of physical and political gravitation.

In a political view, France was low indeed. She had lost every thing, even to her name.

> "Jacet ingens littore truncus,
> Avolsumque humeris *caput*, et sine *nomine* corpus."*

He was astonished at it—he was alarmed at it—he trembled at the uncertainty of all human greatness.

Since the house had been prorogued in the summer much work was done in France. The French had shewn themselves the ablest architects of ruin that had hitherto existed in the world. In that very short space of time they had completely pulled down to the ground, their monarchy; their church; their nobility; their law; their revenue; their army; their navy; their commerce; their arts; and their manufactures. They had done their business for us as rivals, in a way in which twenty Ramillies or Blenheims could never have done it. Were we absolute conquerors, and France to lie prostrate at our feet, we should be ashamed to send a commission to settle their affairs, which could impose so hard a law upon the French, and so destructive of all their consequence as a nation, as that they had imposed on themselves.

* Mr. Burke, probably, had in his mind the remainder of the passage, and was filled with some congenial apprehensions:

> "Hæc finis Priami fatorum; hic exitus illum
> Sorte tulit, Trojam incensam, et prolapsa videntem
> Pergama; tot quandam populis, terrisque, superbum
> Regnatorem Asiæ. Jacet ingens littore truncus,
> Avolsumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.
> *At me* tum primum sævus circumstetit horror;
> Obstupui: *subiit chari genitoris imago*"——

France, by the mere circumstance of its vicinity, had been, and in a degree always must be, an object of our vigilance, either with regard to her actual power, or to her influence and example. As to the former, he had spoken; as to the latter, (her example) he should say a few words: for by this example our friendship and our intercourse with that nation had once been, and might again, become more dangerous to us than their worst hostility.

In the last century, Louis the Fourteenth had established a greater and better disciplined military force than ever had been before seen in Europe, and with it a perfect despotism. Though that despotism was proudly arrayed in manners, gallantry, splendor, magnificence, and even covered over with the imposing robes of science, literature, and arts, it was, in government, nothing better than a painted and gilded tyranny; in religion, a hard, stern intolerance, the fit companion and auxiliary to the despotic tyranny which prevailed in its government. The same character of despotism insinuated itself into every court of Europe—the same spirit of disproportioned magnificence—the same love of standing armies, above the ability of the people. In particular, our then sovereigns, king Charles and king James, fell in love with the government of their neighbor, so flattering to the pride of kings. A similarity of sentiments brought on connections equally dangerous to the interests and liberties of their country. It were well that the infection had gone no farther than the throne. The admiration of a government flourishing and successful, unchecked in its operations, and seeming therefore to compass its objects more speedily and effectually, gained something upon all ranks of people. The good patriots of that day, however, struggled against it. They sought nothing more anxiously than to break off all communication with France, and to beget a total alienation from its councils and its example; which, by the animosity prevalent between the abettors of their religious system and the assertors of ours, was, in some degree, effected.

This day the evil is totally changed in France; but there

is an evil there. The disease is altered; but the vicinity of the two countries remains, and must remain; and the natural mental habits of mankind are such, that the present distemper of France is far more likely to be contagious than the old one; for it is not quite easy to spread a passion for servitude among the people: but in all evils of the opposite kind our natural inclinations are flattered. In the case of despotism there is the *fœdum crimen servitutis;* in the last the *falsa* species *libertatis;* and accordingly, as the historian says, *pronis auribus accipitur.*

In the last age we were in danger of being entangled by the example of France in the net of a relentless despotism. It is not necessary to say any thing upon that example. It exists no longer. Our present danger from the example of a people, whose character knows no medium, is, with regard to government, a danger from anarchy; a danger of being led through an admiration of successful fraud and violence, to an imitation of the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy. On the side of religion, the danger of their example is no longer from intolerance, but from atheism; a foul, unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and consolation of mankind; which seems in France, for a long time, to have been embodied into a faction, accredited, and almost avowed.

These are our present dangers from France: but, in his opinion, the very worst part of the example set is, in the late assumption of citizenship by the army, and the whole of the arrangement, or rather disarrangement of their military.

He was sorry that his right honorable friend (Mr. Fox) had dropped even a word expressive of exultation on that circumstance; or that he seemed of opinion that the objection from standing armies was at all lessened by it. He attributed this opinion of Mr. Fox entirely to his known zeal for the best of all causes, Liberty. That it was with a pain inexpressible he was obliged to have even the shadow of a

difference with his friend, whose authority would be always great with him, and with all thinking people. *Quæ maxima semper censetur nobis, et* erit *quæ maxima semper*—His confidence in Mr. Fox was such, and so ample, as to be almost implicit. That he was not ashamed to avow that degree of docility. That when the choice is well made, it strengthens instead of oppressing our intellect. That he who calls in the aid of an equal understanding doubles his own. He who profits of a superior understanding, raises his powers to a level with the height of a superior understanding he unites with. He had found the benefit of such a junction, and would not lightly depart from it. He wished almost, on all occasions, that his sentiments were understood to be conveyed in Mr. Fox's words; and that he wished as amongst the greatest benefits he could wish the country, an eminent share of power to that right honorable gentleman; because he knew that, to his great and masterly understanding, he had joined the greatest possible degree of that natural moderation, which is the best corrective of power; that he was of the most artless, candid, open, and benevolent disposition; disinterested in the extreme; of a temper mild and placable, even to a fault; without one drop of gall in his whole constitution.

That the house must perceive, from his coming forward to mark an expression or two of his best friend, how anxious he was to keep the distemper of France from the least countenance in England, where he was sure some wicked persons had shewn a strong disposition to recommend an imitation of the French spirit of reform. He was so strongly opposed to any the least tendency towards the *means* of introducing a democracy like theirs, as well as to the *end* itself, that much as it would afflict him, if such a thing could be attempted, and that any friend of his could concur in such measures, (he was far, very far, from believing they could,) he would abandon his best friends, and join with his worst enemies to oppose either the means or the end; and to resist all violent exertions of the spirit of innovation, so distant

from all principles of true and safe reformation; a spirit well calculated to overturn states, but perfectly unfit to amend them.

That he was no enemy to reformation. Almost every business in which he was much concerned, from the first day he sat in that house to that hour, was a business of reformation; and when he had not been employed in correcting he had been employed in resisting abuses. Some traces of this spirit in him now stand on their statute-book. In his opinion, any thing which unnecessarily tore to pieces the contexture of the state, not only prevented all real reformation, but introduced evils which would call, but perhaps, call in vain, for new reformation.

That he thought the French nation very unwise. What they valued themselves on, was a disgrace to them. They had gloried (and some people in England had thought fit to take share in that glory) in making a revolution; as if revolutions were good things in themselves. All the horrors, and all the crimes of the anarchy which led to their revolution, which attend its progress, and which may virtually attend it in its establishment, pass for nothing with the lovers of revolutions. The French have made their way through the destruction of their country, to a bad constitution, when they were absolutely in possession of a good one. They were in possession of it the day the states met in separate orders. Their business, had they been either virtuous, or wise, or had been left to their own judgment, was to secure the stability and independence of the states, according to those orders, under the monarch on the throne. It was then their duty to redress grievances.

Instead of redressing grievances, and improving the fabric of their state, to which they were called by their monarch, and sent by their country, they were made to take a very different course. They first destroyed all the balances and counterpoises which serve to fix the state, and to give it a steady direction; and which furnish sure correctives to any violent spirit which may prevail in any of the orders. These

balances existed in their oldest constitution; and in the constitution of this country; and in the constitution of all the countries in Europe. These they rashly destroyed, and then they melted down the whole into one incongruous, ill-connected mass.

When they had done this, they instantly, and with the most atrocious perfidy and breach of all faith among men, laid the axe to the root of all property, and consequently of all national prosperity, by the principles they established, and the example they set, in confiscating all the possessions of the church. They made and recorded a sort of *institute* and *digest* of anarchy, called the rights of man, in such a pedantic abuse of elementary principles as would have disgraced boys at school; but this declaration of rights was worse than trifling and pedantic in them; as by their name and authority they systematically destroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. By this mad declaration they subverted the state; and brought on such calamities as no country, without a long war, has ever been known to suffer, and which may in the end produce such a war, and perhaps, many such.

With them the question was not between despotism and liberty. The sacrifice they made of the peace and power of their country was not made on the altar of freedom. Freedom, and a better security for freedom than that they have taken, they might have had without any sacrifice at all. They brought themselves into all the calamities they suffer, not that through them they might obtain a British constitution; they plunged themselves headlong into those calamities, to prevent themselves from settling into that constitution, or into any thing resembling it.

That if they should perfectly succeed in what they propose, as they are likely enough to do, and establish a democracy, or a mob of democracies, in a country circumstanced like France, they will establish a very bad government—a very bad species of tyranny.

That, the worst effect of all their proceeding was on their

military, which was rendered an army for every purpose but that of defence. That, if the question was, whether soldiers were to forget they were citizens, as an abstract proposition, he could have no difference about it; though as it is usual, when abstract principles are to be applied, much was to be thought on the manner of uniting the character of citizen and soldier. But as applied to the events which had happened in France, where the abstract principle was clothed with its circumstances, he thought that his friend would agree with him, that what was done there furnished no matter of exultation, either in the act or the example. These soldiers were not citizens; but base hireling mutineers, and mercenary sordid deserters, wholly destitute of any honorable principle. Their conduct was one of the fruits of that anarchic spirit, from the evils of which a democracy itself was to be resorted to, by those who were the least disposed to that form, as a sort of refuge. It was not an army in corps and with discipline, and embodied under the respectable patriotic citizens of the state in resisting tyranny. Nothing like it. It was the case, of common soldiers deserting from their officers, to join a furious, licentious populace. It was a desertion to a cause, the real object of which was to level all those institutions, and to break all those connections, natural and civil, that regulate and hold together the community by a chain of subordination; to raise soldiers against their officers; servants against their masters; tradesmen against their customers; artificers against their employers; tenants against their landlords; curates against their bishops; and children against their parents. That this cause of theirs was not an enemy to servitude, but to society.

He wished the house to consider, how the members would like to have their mansions pulled down and pillaged, their persons abused, insulted, and destroyed; their title deeds brought out and burned before their faces, and themselves and their families driven to seek refuge in every nation throughout Europe, for no other reason than this; that without any fault of theirs, they were born gentlemen, and men of

property, and were suspected of a desire to preserve their consideration and their estates. The desertion in France was to aid an abominable sedition, the very professed principle of which was an implacable hostility to nobility and gentry, and whose savage war-whoop was "*à l'Aristocrate*," by which senseless, bloody cry, they animated one another to rapine and murder; whilst abetted by ambitious men of another class, they were crushing every thing respectable and virtuous in their nation, and to their power disgracing almost every name, by which we formerly knew there was such a country in the world as France.

He knew too well, and he felt as much as any man, how difficult it was to accommodate a standing army to a free constitution, or to any constitution. An armed, disciplined body is, in its essence, dangerous to liberty; undisciplined, it is ruinous to society. Its component parts are, in the latter case, neither good citizens nor good soldiers. What have they thought of in France, under such a difficulty as almost puts the human faculties to a stand? They have put their army under such a variety of principles of duty, that it is more likely to breed litigants, pettifoggers, and mutineers, than soldiers.* They have set up, to balance their crown army, another army, deriving under another authority, called a municipal army—a balance of armies, not of orders. These latter they have destroyed with every mark of insult and oppression. States may, and they will best, exist with a partition of civil powers. Armies cannot exist under a divided command. This state of things he thought, in effect, a state of war, or, at best, but a truce instead of peace, in the country.

What a dreadful thing is a standing army, for the conduct of the whole or any part of which, no man is responsible! In the present state of the French crown army, is the crown responsible for the whole of it? Is there any general who can be responsible for the obedience of a brigade? any colonel for that of a regiment? any captain for that of a company?

* They are sworn to obey the king, the nation, and the law.

And as to the municipal army, reinforced as it is by the new citizen-deserters, under whose command are they? Have we not seen them, not led by, but dragging their nominal commander with a rope about his neck, when they or those whom they accompanied, proceeded to the most atrocious acts of treason and murder. Are any of these armies? Are any of these citizens?

We have in such a difficulty as that of fitting a standing army to the state, he conceived, done much better. We have not distracted our army by divided principles of obedience. We have put them under a single authority, with a simple (our common) oath of fidelity; and we keep the whole under our annual inspection. This was doing all that could be safely done.

He felt some concern that this strange thing called a Revolution in France, should be compared with the glorious event commonly called the Revolution in England; and the conduct of the soldiery, on that occasion, compared with the behavior of some of the troops of France in the present instance. At that period the Prince of Orange, a prince of the blood royal in England, was called in by the flower of the English aristocracy to defend its ancient constitution, and not to level all distinctions. To this prince, so invited, the aristocratic leaders who commanded the troops went over with their several corps, in bodies, to the deliverer of their country. Aristocratic leaders brought up the corps of citizens who newly enlisted in this cause. Military obedience changed its object; but military discipline was not for a moment interrupted in its principle. The troops were ready for war, but indisposed to mutiny.

But as the conduct of the English armies was different, so was that of the whole English nation at that time. In truth, the circumstances of our revolution (as it is called) and that of France are just the reverse of each other in almost every particular, and in the whole spirit of the transaction. With us it was the case of a legal monarch attempting arbitrary power—in France it is the case of an arbitrary monarch be-

ginning, from whatever cause, to legalize his authority. The one was to be resisted, the other was to be managed and directed; but in neither case was the order of the state to be changed, lest government might be ruined, which ought only to be corrected and legalized. With us we got rid of the man, and preserved the constituent parts of the state. There they get rid of the constituent parts of the state, and keep the man. What we did was in truth and substance, and in a constitutional light, a revolution, not made, but prevented. We took solid securities; we settled doubtful questions; we corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable fundamental parts of our constitution we made no revolution; no, nor any alteration at all. We did not impair the monarchy. Perhaps it might be shewn that we strengthened it very considerably. The nation kept the same ranks, the same orders, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property, the same subordinations, the same order in the law, in the revenue, and in the magistracy; the same lords, the same commons, the same corporations, the same electors.

The church was not impaired. Her estates, her majesty, her splendor, her orders and gradations continued the same. She was preserved in her full efficiency, and cleared only of a certain intolerance, which was her weakness and disgrace. The church and the state were the same after the revolution that they were before, but better secured in every part.

Was little done because a revolution was not made in the constitution? No! Every thing was done; because we commenced with reparation not with ruin. Accordingly the state flourished. Instead of lying as dead, in a sort of trance, or exposed as some others, in an epileptic fit, to the pity or derision of the world, for her wild, ridiculous, convulsive movements, impotent to every purpose but that of dashing out her brains against the pavement, Great Britain rose above the standard, even of her former self. An era of a more improved domestic prosperity then commenced, and still continues, not only unimpaired, but growing, under the wasting hand of time. All the energies of the country were awakened. Eng-

land never presented a firmer countenance, or a more vigorous arm, to all her enemies, and to all her rivals. Europe under her respired and revived. Every where she appeared as the protector, asserter, or avenger of liberty. A war was made and supported against fortune itself. The treaty of Ryswick, which first limited the power of France, was soon after made: the grand alliance very shortly followed, which shook to the foundations the dreadful power which menaced the independence of mankind. The states of Europe lay happy under the shade of a great and free monarchy, which knew how to be great without endangering its own peace at home, or the internal or external peace of any of its neighbors.

Mr. Burke said he should have felt very unpleasantly if he had not delivered these sentiments. He was near the end of his natural, probably still nearer the end of his political career; that he was weak and weary; and wished for rest. That he was little disposed to controversies, or what is called a detailed opposition. That at his time of life, if he could not do something by some sort of weight of opinion, natural or acquired, it was useless and indecorous to attempt any thing by mere struggle. *Turpe senex miles.* That he had for that reason little attended the army business, or that of the revenue, or almost any other matter of detail for some years past. That he had, however, his task. He was far from condemning such opposition; on the contrary, he most highly applauded it, where a just occasion existed for it, and gentlemen had vigor and capacity to pursue it. Where a great occasion occurred, he was, and while he continued in parliament, would be amongst the most active and the most earnest, as he hoped he had shewn on a late event. With respect to the constitution itself, he wished few alterations in it. Happy if he left it not the worse for any share he had taken in its service.

Mr. Fox then rose, and declared, in substance, that so far as regarded the French army, he went no farther than the general principle, by which that army shewed itself indisposed to be an instrument in the servitude of their fellow citi-

zens, but did not enter into the particulars of their conduct. He declared, that he did not affect a democracy. That he always thought any of the simple, unbalanced governments bad; simple monarchy, simple aristocracy, simple democracy; he held them all imperfect or vicious; all were bad by themselves: the composition alone was good. That these had been always his principles, in which he had agreed with his friend, Mr. Burke, of whom he said many kind and flattering things, which Mr. Burke, I take it for granted, will know himself too well to think he merits, from any thing but Mr. Fox's acknowledged good nature. Mr. Fox thought, however, that, in many cases, Mr. Burke was rather carried too far by his hatred to innovation.

Mr. Burke said, he well knew that these had been Mr. Fox's invariable opinions; that they were a sure ground for the confidence of his country. But he had been fearful, that cabals of very different intentions, would be ready to make use of his great name, against his character and sentiments, in order to derive a credit to their destructive machinations.

Mr. Sheridan then rose, and made a lively and eloquent speech against Mr. Burke; in which, among other things, he said that Mr. Burke had libeled the national assembly of France, and had cast out reflections on such characters as those of the Marquis de la Fayette and Mr. Bailly.

Mr. Burke said that he did not libel the national assembly of France, whom he considered very little in the discussion of these matters. That he thought all the substantial power resided in the republic of Paris, whose authority guided, or whose example was followed by, all the republics of France. The republic of Paris had an army under their orders, and not under those of the national assembly.

N. B. As to the particular gentlemen, I do not remember that Mr. Burke mentioned either of them—certainly not Mr. Bailly. He alluded, undoubtedly, to the case of the Marquis de la Fayette; but whether what he asserted of him be a libel on him, must be left to those who are acquainted with the business.

Mr. Pitt concluded the debate with becoming gravity and dignity, and a reserve on both sides of the question, as related to France, fit for a person in a ministerial situation. He said, that what he had spoken only regarded France when she should unite, which he rather thought she soon might, with the liberty she had acquired, the blessings of law and order. He, too, said several civil things concerning the sentiments of Mr. Burke, as applied to this country.

REFLECTIONS

ON

THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE,

AND ON

THE PROCEEDINGS IN CERTAIN SOCIETIES IN LONDON,

RELATIVE TO THAT EVENT.

IN A

LETTER INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SENT

TO A GENTLEMAN IN PARIS.

1790.

It may not be unnecessary to inform the reader, that the following Reflections had their origin in a correspondence between the author and a very young gentleman at Paris, who did him the honor of desiring his opinion upon the important transactions, which then, and ever since, have so much occupied the attention of all men. An answer was written some time in the month of October, 1789; but it was kept back upon prudential considerations. That letter is alluded to in the beginning of the following sheets. It has been since forwarded to the person to whom it was addressed. The reasons for the delay in sending it were assigned in a short letter to the same gentleman. This produced on his part a new and pressing application for the author's sentiments.

The author began a second and a more full discussion on the subject. This he had some thoughts of publishing early in the last spring; but the matter gaining upon him, he found that what he had undertaken not only far exceeded the measure of a letter, but that its importance required rather a more detailed consideration than at that time he had any leisure to bestow upon it. However, having thrown down his first thoughts in the form of a letter, and indeed when he sat down to write, having intended it for a private letter, he found it difficult to change the form of address, when his sentiments had grown into a greater extent, and had received another direction. A different plan, he is sensible, might be more favorable to a commodious division and distribution of his matter.

REFLECTIONS.

Dear Sir,

You are pleased to call again, and with some earnestness, for my thoughts on the late proceedings in France. I will not give you reason to imagine that I think my sentiments of such value as to wish myself to be solicited about them. They are of too little consequence to be very anxiously either communicated or withheld. It was from attention to you, and to you only, that I hesitated at the time when you first desired to receive them. In the first letter I had the honor to write to you, and which at length I send, I wrote neither for, nor from, any description of men; nor shall I in this. My errors, if any, are my own. My reputation alone is to answer for them.

You see, sir, by the long letter I have transmitted to you, that, though I do most heartily wish that France may be animated by a spirit of rational liberty, and that I think you bound, in all honest policy, to provide a permanent body, in which that spirit may reside, and an effectual organ, by which it may act, it is my misfortune to entertain great doubts concerning several material points in your late transactions.

You imagined, when you wrote last, that I might possibly be reckoned among the approvers of certain proceedings in France, from the solemn public seal of sanction they have received from two clubs of gentlemen in London, called the Constitutional Society, and the Revolution Society.

I certainly have the honor to belong to more clubs than one, in which the constitution of this kingdom, and the prin-

ciples of the glorious revolution are held in high reverence: and I reckon myself among the most forward in my zeal for maintaining that constitution and those principles in their utmost purity and vigor. It is because I do so, that I think it necessary for me, that there should be no mistake. Those who cultivate the memory of our revolution, and those who are attached to the constitution of this kingdom, will take good care how they are involved with persons who, under the pretext of zeal towards the revolution and constitution, too frequently wander from their true principles; and are ready on every occasion to depart from the firm but cautious and deliberate spirit which produced the one, and which presides in the other. Before I proceed to answer the more material particulars in your letter, I shall beg leave to give you such information as I have been able to obtain of the two clubs which have thought proper, as bodies, to interfere in the concerns of France; first assuring you, that I am not, and that I have never been, a member of either of those societies.

The first, calling itself the Constitutional Society, or Society for Constitutional Information, or by some such title, is, I believe, of seven or eight years standing. The institution of this society appears to be of a charitable, and so far of a laudable, nature: it was intended for the circulation, at the expense of the members, of many books, which few others would be at the expense of buying; and which might lie on the hands of the booksellers, to the great loss of an useful body of men. Whether the books so charitably circulated, were ever as charitably read, is more than I know. Possibly several of them have been exported to France; and, like goods not in request here, may with you have found a market. I have heard much talk of the lights to be drawn from books that are sent from hence. What improvements they have had in their passage (as it is said some liquors are meliorated by crossing the sea) I cannot tell: but I never heard a man of common judgment, or the least degree of information, speak a word in praise of the greater part of the publications circulated by that society; nor have their proceedings been ac-

counted, except by some of themselves, as of any serious consequence.

Your national assembly seems to entertain much the same opinion that I do of this poor charitable club. As a nation, you reserved the whole stock of your eloquent acknowledgments for the Revolution Society; when their fellows in the Constitutional were, in equity, entitled to some share. Since you have selected the Revolution Society as the great object of your national thanks and praises, you will think me excusable in making its late conduct the subject of my observations. The national assembly of France has given importance to these gentlemen by adopting them; and they return the favor, by acting as a committee in England for extending the principles, of the national assembly. Henceforward we must consider them as a kind of privileged persons; as no inconsiderable members in the diplomatic body. This is one among the revolutions which have given splendor to obscurity, and distinction to undiscerned merit. Until very lately I do not recollect to have heard of this club. I am quite sure that it never occupied a moment of my thoughts; nor, I believe, those of any person out of their own set. I find, upon inquiry, that on the anniversary of the revolution in 1688, a club of dissenters, but of what denomination I know not, have long had the custom of hearing a sermon in one of their churches; and that afterwards they spent the day cheerfully, as other clubs do, at the tavern. But I never heard that any public measure, or political system, much less that the merits of the constitution of any foreign nation, had been the subject of a formal proceeding at their festivals; until, to my inexpressible surprise, I found them in a sort of public capacity, by a congratulatory address, giving an authoritative sanction to the proceedings of the national assembly in France.

In the ancient principles and conduct of the club, so far at least as they were declared, I see nothing to which I could take exception. I think it very probable, that for some purpose, new members may have entered among them; and that some truly christian politicians, who love to dispense benefits,

but are careful to conceal the hand which distributes the dole, may have made them the instruments of their pious designs. Whatever I may have reason to suspect concerning private management, I shall speak of nothing as of a certainty but what is public.

For one, I should be sorry to be thought, directly or indirectly, concerned in their proceedings. I certainly take my full share, along with the rest of the world, in my individual and private capacity, in speculating on what has been done, or is doing, on the public stage; in any place ancient or modern; in the republic of Rome, or the republic of Paris; but having no general apostolical mission, being a citizen of a particular state, and being bound up in a considerable degree, by its public will, I should think it at least improper and irregular for me to open a formal public correspondence with the actual government of a foreign nation, without the express authority of the government under which I live.

I should be still more unwilling to enter into that correspondence, under any thing like an equivocal description, which to many, unacquainted with our usages, might make the address, in which I joined, appear as the act of persons in some sort of corporate capacity, acknowledged by the laws of this kingdom, and authorized to speak the sense of some part of it. On account of the ambiguity and uncertainty of unauthorized general descriptions, and of the deceit which may be practised under them, and not from mere formality, the house of commons would reject the most sneaking petition for the most trifling object, under that mode of signature to which you have thrown open the folding-doors of your presence chamber, and have ushered into your national assembly, with as much ceremony and parade, and with as great a bustle of applause, as if you had been visited by the whole representative majesty of the whole English nation. If what this society has thought proper to send forth had been a piece of argument, it would have signified little whose argument it was. It would be neither the more nor the less convincing on account of the party it came from. But this is only a vote and

resolution. It stands solely on authority; and in this case it is the mere authority of individuals, few of whom appear. Their signatures ought, in my opinion, to have been annexed to their instrument. The world would then have the means of knowing how many they are; who they are; and of what value their opinions may be, from their personal abilities, from their knowledge, their experience, or their lead and authority in this state. To me, who am but a plain man, the proceeding looks a little too refined, and too ingenious; it has too much the air of a political stratagem, adopted for the sake of giving, under a high-sounding name, an importance to the public declarations of this club, which, when the matter came to be closely inspected, they did not altogether so well deserve. It is a policy that has very much the complexion of a fraud.

I flatter myself that I love a manly, moral, regulated liberty as well as any gentleman of that society, be he who he will; and perhaps I have given as good proofs of my attachment to that cause, in the whole course of my public conduct. I think I envy liberty as little as they do, to any other nation. But I cannot stand forward, and give praise or blame to any thing which relates to human actions, and human concerns, on a simple view of the object, as it stands stripped of every relation, in all the nakedness and solitude of metaphysical abstraction. Circumstances (which with some gentlemen pass for nothing) give in reality to every political principle its distinguishing color, and discriminating effect. The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government (for she then had a government) without inquiry what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered? Can I now congratulate the same nation upon its freedom? Is it because liberty in the abstract may be classed among the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of

light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison, upon the recovery of his natural rights? This would be to act over again the scene of the criminals condemned to the galleys, and their heroic deliverer, the metaphysic knight of the sorrowful countenance.

When I see the spirit of liberty in action, I see a strong principle at work; and this, for awhile, is all I can possibly know of it. The wild *gas*, the fixed air is plainly broke loose: but we ought to suspend our judgment until the first effervescence is a little subsided, till the liquor is cleared, and until we see something deeper than the agitation of a troubled and frothy surface. I must be tolerably sure, before I venture publicly to congratulate men upon a blessing, that they have really received one. Flattery corrupts both the receiver and the giver; and adulation is not of more service to the people than to kings. I should therefore suspend my congratulations on the new liberty of France, until I was informed how it had been combined with government; with public force; with the discipline and obedience of armies; with the collection of an effective and well-distributed revenue; with morality and religion; with solidity and property; with peace and order; with civil and social manners. All these (in their way) are good things too; and, without them, liberty is not a benefit whilst it lasts, and it is not likely to continue long. The effect of liberty to individuals is, that they may do what they please: we ought to see what it will please them to do, before we risk congratulations, which may be soon turned into complaints. Prudence would dictate this in the case of separate insulated private men; but liberty, when men act in bodies, is *power*. Considerate people, before they declare themselves, will observe the use which is made of *power;* and particularly of so trying a thing as *new* power in *new* persons, of whose principles, tempers, and dispositions they have little or no experience, and in situations, where those who appear the most stirring in the scene may possibly not be the real movers.

All these considerations however were below the trans-

cendental dignity of the revolution society. Whilst I continued in the country, from whence I had the honor of writing to you, I had but an imperfect idea of their transactions. On my coming to town, I sent for an account of their proceedings, which had been published by their authority, containing a sermon of Dr. Price, with the Duke de Rochefaucault's and the Archbishop of Aix's letter, and several other documents annexed. The whole of that publication, with the manifest design of connecting the affairs of France with those of England, by drawing us into an imitation of the conduct of the national assembly, gave me a considerable degree of uneasiness. The effect of that conduct upon the power, credit, prosperity, and tranquillity of France, became every day more evident. The form of constitution to be settled, for its future polity, became more clear. We are now in a condition to discern, with tolerable exactness, the true nature of the object held up to our imitation. If the prudence of reserve and decorum dictates silence in some circumstances, in others prudence of a higher order may justify us in speaking our thoughts. The beginnings of confusion with us in England are at present feeble enough; but with you, we have seen an infancy still more feeble, growing by moments into a strength to heap mountains upon mountains, and to wage war with heaven itself. Whenever our neighbor's house is on fire, it cannot be amiss for the engines to play a little on our own. Better to be despised for too anxious apprehensions, than ruined by too confident a security.

Solicitous chiefly for the peace of my own country, but by no means unconcerned for yours, I wish to communicate more largely, what was at first intended only for your private satisfaction. I shall still keep your affairs in my eye, and continue to address myself to you. Indulging myself in the freedom of epistolary intercourse, I beg leave to throw out my thoughts, and express my feelings, just as they arise in my mind, with very little attention to formal method. I set out with the proceedings of the revolution society; but I shall not confine myself to them. Is it possible I should? It looks to me as if I

were in a great crisis, not of the affairs of France alone, but all Europe, perhaps of more than Europe. All circumstances taken together, the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world. The most wonderful things are brought about in many instances by means the most absurd and ridiculous; in the most ridiculous modes; and apparently, by the most contemptible instruments. Every thing seems out of nature in this strange chaos of levity and ferocity, and of all sorts of crimes jumbled together with all sorts of follies. In viewing this monstrous tragicomic scene, the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate scorn and horror.

It cannot however be denied, that to some this strange scene appeared in quite another point of view. Into them it inspired no other sentiments than those of exultation and rapture. They saw nothing in what has been done in France, but a firm and temperate exertion of freedom; so consistent, on the whole, with morals and with piety, as to make it deserving not only of the secular applause of dashing Machiavelian politicians, but to render it a fit theme for all the devout effusions of sacred eloquence.

On the forenoon of the 4th of November last, Doctor Richard Price, a non-conforming minister of eminence, preached at the dissenting meeting-house of the Old Jewry, to his club or society, a very extraordinary miscellaneous sermon, in which there are some good moral and religious sentiments, and not ill expressed, mixed up with a sort of porridge of various political opinions and reflections: but the revolution in France is the grand ingredient in the cauldron. I consider the address transmitted by the revolution society to the national assembly, through Earl Stanhope, as originating in the principles of the sermon, and as a corollary from them. It was moved by the preacher of that discourse. It was passed by those who came reeking from the effect of the sermon, without any censure or qualification, expressed or implied. If, how-

ever, any of the gentlemen concerned shall wish to separate the sermon from the resolution, they know how to acknowledge the one, and to disavow the other. They may do it: I cannot.

For my part, I looked on that sermon as the public declaration of a man much connected with literary caballers, and intriguing philosophers; with political theologians, and theological politicians, both at home and abroad. I know they set him up as a sort of oracle; because, with the best intentions in the world, he naturally *philippizes*, and chants his prophetic song in exact unison with their designs.

That sermon is in a strain which I believe has not been heard in this kingdom, in any of the pulpits which are tolerated or encouraged in it, since the year 1648, when a predecessor of Dr. Price, the reverend Hugh Peters, made the vault of the king's own chapel at St. James's ring with the honor and privilege of the saints, who, with the "high praises of God in their mouths, and a *two*-edged sword in their hands, were to execute judgment on the heathen, and punishments upon the *people;* to bind their *kings* with chains, and their *nobles* with fetters of iron." * Few harangues from the pulpit, except in the days of your league in France, or in the days of our solemn league and covenant in England, have ever breathed less of the spirit of moderation than this lecture in the Old Jewry. Supposing, however, that something like moderation were visible in this political sermon; yet politics and the pulpit are terms that have little agreement. No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of christian charity. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are, for the greater part, ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are so fond of meddling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which

* Psalm cxlix.

they pronounce with so much confidence, they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite. Surely the church is a place where one day's truce ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.

This pulpit style, revived after so long a discontinuance, had to me the air of novelty, and of a novelty not wholly without danger. I do not charge this danger equally to every part of the discourse. The hint given to a noble and reverend lay-divine, who is supposed high in office in one of our universities,* and other lay-divines "of *rank* and literature," may be proper and seasonable, though somewhat new. If the noble *Seekers* should find nothing to satisfy their pious fancies in the old staple of the national church, or in all the rich variety to be found in the well-assorted warehouses of the dissenting congregations, Dr. Price advises them to improve upon non-conformity; and to set up, each of them, a separate meeting-house upon his own particular principles.† It is somewhat remarkable that this reverend divine should be so earnest for setting up new churches, and so perfectly indifferent concerning the doctrine which may be taught in them. His zeal is of a curious character. It is not for the propagation of his own opinions, but of any opinions. It is not for the diffusion of truth, but for the spreading of contradiction. Let the noble teachers but dissent, it is no matter from whom or from what. This great point once secured, it is taken for granted their religion will be rational and manly. I doubt whether religion would reap all the benefits which the calculating divine computes from this "great company of great preachers." It would certainly be a valuable addition of non-descripts to the ample collec-

* Discourse on the Love of our Country, Nov. 4, 1789, by Dr. Richard Price, 3d edition, p. 17 and 18.

† "Those who dislike that mode of worship which is prescribed by public authority, ought, if they can find *no* worship *out* of the church which they approve, *to set up a separate worship for themselves;* and by doing this, and giving an example of a rational and manly worship, men of *weight* from their *rank* and literature may do the greatest service to society and the world." P. 18, Dr. Price's Sermon.

tion of known classes, genera and species, which at present beautify the *hortus siccus* of dissent. A sermon from a noble duke, or a noble marquis, or a noble earl, or baron bold, would certainly increase and diversify the amusements of this town, which begins to grow satiated with the uniform round of its vapid dissipations. I should only stipulate that these new *Mess-Johns* in robes and coronets should keep some sort of bounds in the democratic and leveling principles which are expected from their titled pulpits. The new evangelists will, I dare say, disappoint the hopes that are conceived of them. They will not become, literally as well as figuratively, polemic divines, nor be disposed so to drill their congregations, that they may, as in former blessed times, preach their doctrines to regiments of dragoons, and corps of infantry and artillery. Such arrangements, however favorable to the cause of compulsory freedom, civil and religious, may not be equally conducive to the national tranquillity. These few restrictions I hope are no great stretches of intolerance, no very violent exertions of despotism.

But I may say of our preacher, "*utinam nugis tota illa dedisset tempora sævitiæ.*"—All things in this his fulminating bull are not of so innoxious a tendency. His doctrines affect our constitution in its vital parts. He tells the revolution society, in this political sermon, that his majesty "is almost the *only* lawful king in the world, because the *only* one who owes his crown to *the choice of his people.*" As to the kings of *the world*, all of whom (except one) this arch pontiff of the *rights of men*, with all the plenitude, and with more than the boldness of the papal deposing power in its meridian fervor of the twelfth century, puts into one sweeping clause of ban and anathema, and proclaims usurpers by circles of longitude and latitude, over the whole globe, it behoves them to consider how they admit into their territories these apostolic missionaries, who are to tell their subjects they are not lawful kings. That is their concern. It is ours, as a domestic interest of some moment, seriously to consider the solidity of the *only* principle upon which these gentlemen

acknowledge a king of Great Britain to be entitled to their allegiance.

This doctrine, as applied to the prince now on the British throne, either is nonsense, and therefore neither true nor false, or it affirms a most unfounded, dangerous, illegal, and unconstitutional position. According to this spiritual doctor of politics, if his majesty does not owe his crown to the choice of his people, he is no *lawful king*. Now nothing can be more untrue than that the crown of this kingdom is so held by his majesty. Therefore if you follow their rule, the king of Great Britain, who most certainly does not owe his high office to any form of popular election, is in no respect better than the rest of the gang of usurpers, who reign, or rather rob, all over the face of this our miserable world, without any sort of right or title to the allegiance of their people. The policy of this general doctrine, so qualified, is evident enough. The propagators of this political gospel are in hopes their abstract principle (their principle that a popular choice is necessary to the legal existence of the sovereign magistracy) would be overlooked, whilst the king of Great Britain was not affected by it. In the mean time the ears of their congregations would be gradually habituated to it, as if it were a first principle admitted without dispute. For the present it would only operate as a theory, pickled in the preserving juices of pulpit eloquence, and laid by for future use. *Condo et compono quæ mox depromere possim.* By this policy, whilst our government is soothed with a reservation in its favor, to which it has no claim, the security, which it has in common with all governments, so far as opinion is security, is taken away.

Thus these politicians proceed, whilst little notice is taken of their doctrines; but when they come to be examined upon the plain meaning of their words, and the direct tendency of their doctrines, then equivocations and slippery constructions come into play. When they say the king owes his crown to the choice of his people, and is therefore the only lawful sovereign in the world, they will perhaps tell us they mean to

say no more than that some of the king's predecessors have been called to the throne by some sort of choice; and therefore he owes his crown to the choice of his people. Thus, by a miserable subterfuge, they hope to render their proposition safe, by rendering it nugatory. They are welcome to the asylum they seek for their offence, since they take refuge in their folly. For, if you admit this interpretation, how does their idea of election differ from our idea of inheritance? And how does the settlement of the crown in the Brunswick line derived from James the First, come to legalize our monarchy, rather than that of any of the neighboring countries? At some time or other, to be sure, all the beginners of dynasties were chosen by those who called them to govern. There is ground enough for the opinion that all the kingdoms of Europe were at a remote period, elective, with more or fewer limitations in the objects of choice; but whatever kings might have been here or elsewhere, a thousand years ago, or in whatever manner the ruling dynasties of England or France may have begun, the king of Great Britain is at this day king by a fixed rule of succession, according to the laws of his country: and whilst the legal conditions of the compact of sovereignty are performed by him (as they are performed) he holds his crown in contempt of the choice of the revolution society, who have not a single vote for a king amongst them, either individually or collectively; though I make no doubt they would soon erect themselves into an electoral college, if things were ripe to give effect to their claim. His majesty's heirs and successors, each in his time and order, will come to the crown with the same contempt of their choice with which his majesty has succeeded to that he wears.

Whatever may be the success of evasion, in explaining away the gross error of *fact*, which supposes that his majesty (though he holds it in concurrence with the wishes) owes his crown to the choice of his people, yet nothing can evade their full explicit declaration, concerning the principle of a right in the people to choose, which right is directly

maintained, and tenaciously adhered to. All the oblique insinuations concerning election bottom in this proposition, and are referable to it. Lest the foundation of the king's exclusive legal title should pass for a mere rant of adulatory freedom, the political divine proceeds dogmatically to assert,* that by the principles of the revolution the people of England have acquired three fundamental rights, all of which, with him, compose one system, and lie together in one short sentence; namely, that we have acquired a right

1. "To choose our own governors."
2. "To cashier them for misconduct."
3. "To frame a government for ourselves."

This new, and hitherto unheard-of bill of rights, though made in the name of the whole people, belongs to those gentlemen and their faction only. The body of the people of England have no share in it. They utterly disclaim it. They will resist the practical assertion of it with their lives and fortunes. They are bound to do so by the laws of their country, made at the time of that very revolution, which is appealed to in favor of the fictitious rights claimed by the society which abuses its name.

These gentlemen of the Old Jewry, in all their reasonings on the revolution of 1688, have a revolution which happened in England about forty years before, and the late French revolution, so much before their eyes, and in their hearts, that they are constantly confounding all the three together. It is necessary that we should separate what they confound. We must recall their erring fancies to the *acts* of the revolution which we revere, for the discovery of its true *principles*. If the *principles* of the revolution of 1688 are any where to be found, it is in the statute called the *Declaration of Right*. In that most wise, sober, and considerate declaration, drawn up by great lawyers and great statesmen, and not by warm and inexperienced enthusiasts, not one word is said, nor one suggestion made, of a general right "to choose our own *govern-*

* P. 34, Discourse on the Love of our Country, by Dr. Price.

ors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to *form* a government for *ourselves.*"

This declaration of right (the act of the first of William and Mary, sess. 2, ch. 2,) is the corner stone of our constitution, as reinforced, explained, improved, and in its fundamental principles for ever settled. It is called "An act for declaring the rights and liberties of the subject, and for *settling* the *succession* of the crown." You will observe that these rights and this succession are declared in one body, and bound indissolubly together.

A few years after this period, a second opportunity offered for asserting a right of election to the crown. On the prospect of a total failure of issue from king William, and from the princess, afterwards queen Anne, the consideration of the settlement of the crown, and of a further security for the liberties of the people, again came before the legislature. Did they this second time make any provision for legalizing the crown on the spurious revolution principles of the Old Jewry? No. They followed the principles which prevailed in the declaration of right; indicating with more precision the persons who were to inherit in the protestant line. This act also incorporated, by the same policy, our liberties, and an hereditary succession in the same act. Instead of a right to choose our own governors, they declared that the *succession* in that line (the protestant line drawn from James the First) was absolutely necessary "for the peace, quiet, and security of the realm," and that it was equally urgent on them "to maintain a *certainty in the succession* thereof, to which the subjects may safely have recourse for their protection." Both these acts, in which are heard the unerring, unambiguous oracles of revolution policy, instead of countenancing the delusive, gipsey predictions of a "right to choose our governors," prove to a demonstration how totally adverse the wisdom of the nation was from turning a case of necessity into a rule of law.

Unquestionably there was at the revolution, in the person of king William, a small and a temporary deviation from the strict order of a regular hereditary succession; but it is against

all genuine principles of jurisprudence to draw a principle from a law made in a special case, and regarding an individual person. *Privilegium non transit in exemplum.* If ever there was a time favorable for establishing the principle, that a king of popular choice was the only legal king, without all doubt it was at the revolution. Its not being done at that time is a proof that the nation was of opinion it ought not to be done at any time. There is no person so completely ignorant of our history, as not to know, that the majority in parliament of both parties were so little disposed to any thing resembling that principle, that at first they were determined to place the vacant crown, not on the head of the prince of Orange, but on that of his wife Mary, daughter of king James, the eldest born of the issue of that king, which they acknowledged as undoubtedly his. It would be to repeat a very trite story, to recall to your memory all those circumstances which demonstrated that their accepting king William was not properly a *choice;* but to all those who did not wish, in effect, to recall king James, or to deluge their country in blood, and again to bring their religion, laws, and liberties into the peril they had just escaped, it was an act of *necessity*, in the strictest moral sense in which necessity can be taken.

In the very act, in which for a time, and in a single case, parliament departed from the strict order of inheritance, in favor of a prince, who, though not next, was however very near in the line of succession, it is curious to observe how lord Somers, who drew the bill called the Declaration of Right, has comported himself on that delicate occasion. It is curious to observe with what address this temporary solution of continuity is kept from the eye; whilst all that could be found in this act of necessity to countenance the idea of an hereditary succession is brought forward, and fostered, and made the most of, by this great man, and by the legislature who followed him. Quitting the dry, imperative style of an act of parliament, he makes the lords and commons fall to a pious, legislative ejaculation, and declare, that they consider it "as a marvelous providence, and merciful goodness of God

to this nation, to preserve their said majesties' *royal* persons, most happily to reign over us *on the throne of their ancestors*, for which, from the bottom of their hearts, they return their humblest thanks and praises."—The legislature plainly had in view the act of recognition of the first of queen Elizabeth, chap. 3d, and of that of James the First, chap. 1st, both acts strongly declaratory of the inheritable nature of the crown, and in many parts they follow, with a nearly literal precision, the words and even the form of thanksgiving, which is found in these old declaratory statutes.

The two houses, in the act of king William, did not thank God that they had found a fair opportunity to assert a right to choose their own governors, much less to make an election the *only lawful* title to the crown. Their having been in condition to avoid the very appearance of it, as much as possible, was by them considered as a providential escape. They threw a politic, well-wrought veil over every circumstance tending to weaken the rights, which in the meliorated order of succession they meant to perpetuate; or which might furnish a precedent for any future departure from what they had then settled for ever. Accordingly, that they might not relax the nerves of their monarchy, and that they might preserve a close conformity to the practice of their ancestors, as it appeared in the declaratory statutes of queen Mary* and queen Elizabeth, in the next clause they vest, by recognition, in their majesties, *all* the legal prerogatives of the crown, declaring, "that in them they are most *fully*, rightfully, and *entirely* invested, incorporated, united, and annexed." In the clause which follows, for preventing questions, by reason of any pretended titles to the crown, they declare (observing also in this the traditionary language, along with the traditionary policy of the nation, and repeating as from a rubric the language of the preceding acts of Elizabeth and James,) that on the preserving "a *certainty* in the SUCCESSION thereof, the unity, peace, and tranquillity of this nation doth, under God, wholly depend."

* 1st Mary, sess. 3, ch. 1.

They knew that a doubtful title of succession would but too much resemble an election; and that an election would be utterly destructive of the "unity, peace, and tranquillity of this nation," which they thought to be considerations of some moment. To provide for these objects, and therefore to exclude for ever the Old Jewry doctrine of "a right to choose our own governors," they follow with a clause, containing a most solemn pledge, taken from the preceding act of queen Elizabeth, as solemn a pledge as ever was or can be given in favor of an hereditary succession, and as solemn a renunciation as could be made of the principles by this society imputed to them. "The lords spiritual and temporal and commons, do, in the name of all the people aforesaid, most humbly and faithfully submit *themselves, their heirs and posterities for ever;* and do faithfully promise, that they will stand to, maintain, and defend their said majesties, and also the *limitation of the crown*, herein specified and contained, to the utmost of their powers," &c. &c.

So far is it from being true, that we acquired a right by the revolution to elect our kings, that if we had possessed it before, the English nation did at that time most solemnly renounce and abdicate it, for themselves, and for all their posterity for ever. These gentlemen may value themselves as much as they please on their whig principles; but I never desire to be thought a better whig than lord Somers; or to understand the principles of the revolution better than those by whom it was brought about; or to read in the declaration of right any mysteries unknown to those whose penetrating style has engraved in our ordinances, and in our hearts, the words and spirit of that immortal law.

It is true that, aided with the powers derived from force and opportunity, the nation was at that time, in some sense, free to take what course it pleased for filling the throne; but only free to do so upon the same grounds on which they might have wholly abolished their monarchy, and every other part of their constitution. However, they did not think such bold changes within their commission. It is indeed difficult,

perhaps impossible, to give limits to the mere *abstract* competence of the supreme power, such as was exercised by parliament at that time; but the limits of a *moral* competence, subjecting, even in powers more indisputably sovereign, occasional will to permanent reason, and to the steady maxims of faith, justice, and fixed fundamental policy, are perfectly intelligible, and perfectly binding upon those who exercise any authority, under any name, or under any title, in the state. The house of lords, for instance, is not morally competent to dissolve the house of commons; no, nor even to dissolve itself, nor to abdicate, if it would, its portion in the legislature of the kingdom. Though a king may abdicate for his own person, he cannot abdicate for the monarchy. By as strong, or by a stronger reason, the house of commons cannot renounce its share of authority. The engagement and pact of society, which generally goes by the name of the constitution, forbids such invasion and such surrender. The constituent parts of a state are obliged to hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive any serious interest under their engagements, as much as the whole state is bound to keep its faith with separate communities. Otherwise competence and power would soon be confounded, and no law be left but the will of a prevailing force. On this principle the succession of the crown has always been what it now is, an hereditary succession by law: in the old line it was a succession by the common law; in the new by the statute law, operating on the principles of the common law, not changing the substance, but regulating the mode, and describing the persons. Both these descriptions of law are of the same force, and are derived from an equal authority, emanating from the common agreement and original compact of the state, *communi sponsione reipublicæ*, and as such are equally binding on king, and people too, as long as the terms are observed, and they continue the same body politic.

It is far from impossible to reconcile, if we do not suffer ourselves to be entangled in the mazes of metaphysic sophistry, the use both of a fixed rule and an occasional devia-

tion; the sacredness of an hereditary principle of succession in our government, with a power of change in its application in cases of extreme emergency. Even in that extremity (if we take the measure of our rights by our exercise of them at the revolution) the change is to be confined to the peccant part only; to the part which produced the necessary deviation; and even then it is to be effected without a decomposition of the whole civil and political mass, for the purpose of originating a new civil order out of the first elements of society.

A state without the means of some change is without the means of its conservation. Without such means it might even risk the loss of that part of the constitution which it wished the most religiously to preserve. The two principles of conservation and correction operated strongly at the two critical periods of the restoration and revolution, when England found itself without a king. At both these periods the nation had lost the bond of union in their ancient edifice; they did not, however, dissolve the whole fabric. On the contrary, in both cases they regenerated the deficient part of the old constitution through the parts which were not impaired. They kept these old parts exactly as they were, that the part recovered might be suited to them. They acted by the ancient organized states in the shape of their old organization, and not by the organic *moleculæ* of a disbanded people. At no time, perhaps, did the sovereign legislature manifest a more tender regard to that fundamental principle of British constitutional policy, than at the time of the revolution, when it deviated from the direct line of hereditary succession. The crown was carried somewhat out of the line in which it had before moved; but the new line was derived from the same stock. It was still a line of hereditary descent; still an hereditary descent in the same blood, though an hereditary descent qualified with protestantism. When the legislature altered the direction, but kept the principle, they shewed that they held it inviolable.

On this principle, the law of inheritance had admitted some

amendment in the old time, and long before the era of the revolution. Some time after the conquest great questions arose upon the legal principles of hereditary descent. It became a matter of doubt, whether the heir *per capita* or the heir *per stirpes* was to succeed; but whether the heir *per capita* gave way when the heirdom *per stirpes* took place, or the catholic heir when the protestant was preferred, the inheritable principle survived with a sort of immortality through all transmigrations—*multosque per annos stat fortuna domus et avi numerantur avorum.* This is the spirit of our constitution, not only in its settled course, but in all its revolutions. Whoever came in, or however he came in, whether he obtained the crown by law, or by force, the hereditary succession was either continued or adopted.

The gentlemen of the society for revolutions see nothing in that of 1688 but the deviation from the constitution; and they take the deviation from the principle for the principle. They have little regard to the obvious consequences of their doctrine, though they may see, that it leaves positive authority in very few of the positive institutions of this country. When such an unwarrantable maxim is once established, that no throne is lawful but the elective, no one act of the princes who preceded this era of fictitious election can be valid. Do these theorists mean to imitate some of their predecessors, who dragged the bodies of our ancient sovereigns out of the quiet of their tombs? Do they mean to attaint and disable backwards all the kings that have reigned before the revolution, and consequently to stain the throne of England with the blot of a continual usurpation? Do they mean to invalidate, annul, or to call into question, together with the titles of the whole line of our kings, that great body of our statute law which passed under those whom they treat as usurpers? to annul laws of inestimable value to our liberties—of as great value at least as any which have passed at or since the period of the revolution? If kings who did not owe their crown to the choice of their people, had no title to make laws, what will become of the statute *de tallagio non concedendo?* of the *peti-*

tion of right? of the act of *habeas corpus?* Do these new doctors of the rights of men presume to assert, that king James the Second, who came to the crown as next of blood, according to the rules of a then unqualified succession, was not to all intents and purposes a lawful king of England, before he had done any of those acts which were justly construed into an abdication of his crown? If he was not, much trouble in parliament might have been saved at the period these gentlemen commemorate. But king James was a bad king with a good title, and not an usurper. The princes who succeeded according to the act of parliament which settled the crown on the electress Sophia and on her descendants, being protestants, came in as much by a title of inheritance as king James did. He came in according to the law, as it stood at his accession to the crown; and the princes of the house of Brunswick came to the inheritance of the crown, not by election, but by the law, as it stood at their several accessions of protestant descent and inheritance, as I hope I have shewn sufficiently.

The law by which this royal family is specifically destined to the succession, is the act of the 12th and 13th of king William. The terms of this act bind "us and our *heirs*, and our *posterity*, to them, their *heirs*, and their *posterity*," being protestants, to the end of time, in the same words as the declaration of right had bound us to the heirs of king William and queen Mary. It therefore secures both an hereditary crown and an hereditary allegiance. On what ground, except the constitutional policy of forming an establishment to secure that kind of succession which is to preclude a choice of the people for ever, could the legislature have fastidiously rejected the fair and abundant choice which our own country presented to them, and searched in strange lands for a foreign princess, from whose womb the line of our future rulers were to derive their title to govern millions of men through a series of ages?

The princess Sophia was named in the act of settlement of the 12th and 13th of king William, for a *stock* and root of *inheritance* to our kings, and not for her merits as a temporary

administratrix of a power, which she might not, and in fact did not, herself ever exercise. She was adopted for one reason, and for one only, because, says the act, "the most excellent princess Sophia, electress and duchess dowager of Hanover, is *daughter* of the most excellent princess Elizabeth, late queen of Bohemia, *daughter* of our late *sovereign lord* king James the First, of happy memory, and is hereby declared to be the next in *succession* in the protestant line," &c. &c.; "and the crown shall continue to the *heirs* of her body, being protestants." This limitation was made by parliament, that through the princess Sophia an inheritable line, not only was to be continued in future, but (what they thought very material) that through her it was to be connected with the old stock of inheritance in king James the First; in order that the monarchy might preserve an unbroken unity through all ages, and might be preserved (with safety to our religion) in the old approved mode by descent, in which, if our liberties had been once endangered, they had often, through all storms and struggles of prerogative and privilege, been preserved. They did well. No experience has taught us, that in any other course or method than that of an *hereditary crown*, our liberties can be regularly perpetuated and preserved sacred as our *hereditary right*. An irregular, convulsive movement may be necessary to throw off an irregular, convulsive disease. But the course of succession is the healthy habit of the British constitution. Was it that the legislature wanted, at the act for the limitation of the crown in the Hanoverian line, drawn through the female descendants of James the First, a due sense of the inconveniences of having two or three, or possibly more, foreigners in succession to the British throne? No!—they had a due sense of the evils which might happen from such foreign rule, and more than a due sense of them. But a more decisive proof cannot be given of the full conviction of the British nation, that the principles of the revolution did not authorize them to elect kings at their pleasure, and without any attention to the ancient fundamental principles of our government, than their continuing to adopt a plan of hereditary protestant

succession in the old line, with all the dangers and all the inconveniences of its being a foreign line full before their eyes, and operating with the utmost force upon their minds.

A few years ago I should be ashamed to overload a matter, so capable of supporting itself, by the then unnecessary support of any argument; but this seditious, unconstitutional doctrine is now publicly taught, avowed, and printed. The dislike I feel to revolutions, the signals for which have so often been given from pulpits; the spirit of change that is gone abroad; the total contempt which prevails with you, and may come to prevail with us, of all ancient institutions, when set in opposition to a present sense of convenience, or to the bent of a present inclination: all these considerations make it not unadvisable, in my opinion, to call back our attention to the true principles of our own domestic laws; that you, my French friend, should begin to know, and that we should continue to cherish them. We ought not, on either side of the water, to suffer ourselves to be imposed upon by the counterfeit wares which some persons, by a double fraud, export to you in illicit bottoms, as raw commodities of British growth, though wholly alien to our soil, in order afterwards to smuggle them back again into this country, manufactured after the newest Paris fashion of an improved liberty.

The people of England will not ape the fashions they have never tried, nor go back to those which they have found mischievous on trial. They look upon the legal hereditary succession of their crown as among their rights, not as among their wrongs; as a benefit, not as a grievance; as a security for their liberty, not as a badge of servitude. They look on the frame of their commonwealth, *such as it stands*, to be of inestimable value; and they conceive the undisturbed succession of the crown to be a pledge of the stability and perpetuity of all the other members of our constitution.

I shall beg leave, before I go any further, to take notice of some paltry artifices, which the abettors of election, as the only lawful title to the crown, are ready to employ, in order to render the support of the just principles of our constitution

a task somewhat invidious. These sophisters substitute a fictitious cause, and feigned personages, in whose favor they suppose you engaged, whenever you defend the inheritable nature of the crown. It is common with them to dispute as if they were in a conflict with some of those exploded fanatics of slavery, who formerly maintained, what I believe no creature now maintains, "that the crown is held by divine, hereditary, and indefeasible right."—These old fanatics of single arbitrary power dogmatized as if hereditary royalty was the only lawful government in the world, just as our new fanatics of popular arbitrary power, maintain that a popular election is the sole lawful source of authority. The old prerogative enthusiasts, it is true, did speculate foolishly, and perhaps impiously too, as if monarchy had more of a divine sanction than any other mode of government; and as if a right to govern by inheritance were in strictness *indefeasible* in every person, who should be found in the succession to a throne, and under every circumstance, which no civil or political right can be. But an absurd opinion concerning the king's hereditary right to the crown does not prejudice one that is rational, and bottomed upon solid principles of law and policy. If all the absurd theories of lawyers and divines were to vitiate the objects in which they are conversant, we should have no law, and no religion, left in the world. But an absurd theory on one side of a question forms no justification for alleging a false fact, or promulgating mischievous maxims on the other.

The second claim of the revolution society is "a right of cashiering their governors for *misconduct*." Perhaps the apprehensions our ancestors entertained of forming such a precedent as that "of cashiering for misconduct," was the cause that the declaration of the act which implied the abdication of King James, was, if it had any fault, rather too guarded, and too circumstantial.* But all this guard, and all this

* "That King James the Second, having endeavored to *subvert the constitution* of the kingdom, by breaking the *original contract* between king and people, and by the advice of jesuits, and other wicked persons, having violated the *fundamental* laws, and *having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom* hath *abdicated* the government, and the throne is thereby *vacant*."

accumulation of circumstances, serves to show the spirit of caution which predominated in the national councils, in a situation in which men irritated by oppression, and elevated by a triumph over it, are apt to abandon themselves to violent and extreme courses: it shews the anxiety of the great men who influenced the conduct of affairs at that great event, to make the revolution a parent of settlement, and not a nursery of future revolutions.

No government could stand a moment, if it could be blown down with any thing so loose and indefinite as an opinion of "*misconduct.*" They who led at the revolution, grounded their virtual abdication of king James upon no such light and uncertain principle. They charged him with nothing less than a design, confirmed by a multitude of illegal overt acts, to *subvert the protestant church and state* and their *fundamental*, unquestionable laws and liberties: they charged him with having broken the *original contract* between king and people. This was more than *misconduct.* A grave and overruling necessity obliged them to take the step they took, and took with infinite reluctance, as under that most rigorous of all laws. Their trust for the future preservation of the constitution was not in future revolutions. The grand policy of all their regulations was to render it almost impracticable for any future sovereign to compel the states of the kingdom to have again recourse to those violent remedies. They left the crown what, in the eye and estimation of law, it had ever been, perfectly irresponsible. In order to lighten the crown still further, they aggravated responsibility on ministers of state. By the statute of the first of king William, sess. 2d, called "*the act for declaring the rights and liberties of the subject, and for settling the succession of the crown,*" they enacted, that the ministers should serve the crown on the terms of that declaration. They secured soon after the *frequent meetings of parliament*, by which the whole government would be under the constant inspection and active control of the popular representative and of the magnates of the kingdom. In the next great constitutional act, that of the 12th and 13th of king

William, for the further limitation of the crown, and *better* securing the rights and liberties of the subject, they provided, "that no pardon under the great seal of England should be pleadable to an impeachment by the commons in parliament." The rule laid down for government in the declaration of right, the constant inspection of parliament, the practical claim of impeachment, they thought infinitely a better security not only for their constitutional liberty, but against the vices of administration, than the reservation of a right so difficult in the practice, so uncertain in the issue, and often so mischievous in the consequences, as that of "cashiering their governors."

Dr. Price in this sermon,* condemns very properly the practice of gross, adulatory addresses to kings. Instead of this fulsome style, he proposes that his majesty should be told, on occasions of congratulation, that "he is to consider himself as more properly the servant than the sovereign of his people." For a compliment, this new form of address does not seem to be very soothing. Those who are servants, in name, as well as in effect, do not like to be told of their situation, their duty, and their obligations. The slave, in the old play, tells his master, "*Hæc commemoratio est quasi exprobatio.*" It is not pleasant as compliment; it is not wholesome as instruction. After all, if the king were to bring himself to echo this new kind of address, to adopt it in terms, and even to take the appellation of Servant of the People as his royal style, how either he or we should be much mended by it, I cannot imagine. I have seen very assuming letters, signed, Your most obedient, humble servant. The proudest domination that ever was endured on earth took a title of still greater humility than that which is now proposed for sovereigns by the Apostle of Liberty. Kings and nations were trampled upon by the foot of one calling himself "the Servant of Servants;" and mandates for deposing sovereigns were sealed with the signet of "the Fisherman."

I should have considered all this as no more than a sort of flippant vain discourse, in which, as in an unsavory fume,

* P. 22, 23, 24.

several persons suffer the spirit of liberty to evaporate, if it were not plainly in support of the idea, and a part of the scheme of "cashiering kings for misconduct." In that light it is worth some observation.

Kings, in one sense, are undoubtedly the servants of the people, because their power has no other rational end than that of the general advantage; but it is not true that they are, in the ordinary sense, (by our constitution, at least,) any thing like servants; the essence of whose situation is to obey the commands of some other, and to be removable at pleasure. But the king of Great Britain obeys no other person; all other persons are individually, and collectively too, under him, and owe to him a legal obedience. The law, which knows neither to flatter nor to insult, calls this high magistrate, not our servant, as this humble divine calls him, but "*our sovereign lord the king*;" and we, on our parts, have learned to speak only the primitive language of the law, and not the confused jargon of their Babylonian pulpits.

As he is not to obey us, but as we are to obey the law in him, our constitution has made no sort of provision towards rendering him as a servant in any degree responsible. Our constitution knows nothing of a magistrate like the *Justicia* of Arragon; nor of any court legally appointed, nor of any process legally settled for submitting the king to the responsibility belonging to all servants. In this he is not distinguished from the commons and the lords; who, in their several public capacities, can never be called to an account for their conduct; although the revolution society chooses to assert, in direct opposition to one of the wisest and most beautiful parts of our constitution, that "a king is no more than the first servant of the public, created by it, *and responsible to it.*"

Ill would our ancestors at the revolution have deserved their fame for wisdom, if they had found no security for their freedom, but in rendering their government feeble in its operations, and precarious in its tenure; if they had been able to contrive no better remedy against arbitrary power than civil confusion. Let these gentlemen state who that *representative*

public is to whom they will affirm the king, as a servant, to be responsible. It will be then time enough for me to produce to them the positive statute law which affirms that he is not.

The ceremony of cashiering kings, of which these gentlemen talk so much at their ease, can rarely, if ever, be performed without force. It then becomes a case of war, and not of constitution. Laws are commanded to hold their tongues amongst arms; and tribunals fall to the ground with the peace they are no longer able to uphold. The revolution of 1688 was obtained by a just war, in the only case in which any war, and much more a civil war, can be just. "Justa bella quibus *necessaria*." The question of dethroning, or, if these gentlemen like the phrase better, "cashiering kings," will always be, as it has always been, an extraordinary question of state, and wholly out of the law; a question (like all other questions of state) of dispositions, and of means, and of probable consequences, rather than of positive rights. As it was not made for common abuses, so it is not to be agitated by common minds. The speculative line of demarcation, where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily definable. It is not a single act, or a single event, which determines it. Governments must be abused and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of; and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the disease is to indicate the remedy to those whom nature has qualified to administer in extremities this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion to a distempered state. Times and occasions, and provocations, will teach their own lessons. The wise will determine from the gravity of the case; the irritable from sensibility to oppression; the high-minded from disdain and indignation at abusive power in unworthy hands; the brave and bold from the love of honorable danger in a generous cause: but, with or without right, a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good.

The third head of right, asserted by the pulpit of the Old

Jewry, namely, the "right to form a government for ourselves," has, at least, as little countenance from any thing done at the revolution, either in precedent or principle, as the two first of their claims. The revolution was made to preserve our *ancient* indisputable laws and liberties, and that *ancient* constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty. If you are desirous of knowing the spirit of our constitution, and the policy which predominated in that great period which has secured it to this hour, pray look for both in our histories, in our records, in our acts of parliament, and journals of parliament, and not in the sermons of the Old Jewry, and the after-dinner toasts of the revolution society. In the former you will find other ideas and another language. Such a claim is as ill-suited to our temper and wishes as it is unsupported by any appearance of authority. The very idea of the fabrication of a new government, is enough to fill us with disgust and horror. We wished at the period of the revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we possess as *an inheritance from our forefathers.* Upon that body and stock of inheritance we have taken care not to inoculate any scion alien to the nature of the original plant. All the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference to antiquity; and I hope, nay I am persuaded, that all those which possibly may be made hereafter, will be carefully formed upon analogical precedent, authority, and example.

Our oldest reformation is that of Magna Charta. You will see that sir Edward Coke, that great oracle of our law, and indeed all the great men who follow him, to Blackstone,* are industrious to prove the pedigree of our liberties. They endeavor to prove, that the ancient charter, the magna charta of king John, was connected with another positive charter from Henry I. and that both the one and the other were nothing more than a re-affirmance of the still more ancient standing law of the kingdom. In the matter of fact,

* See Blackstone's Magna Charta, printed at Oxford, 1759.

for the greater part, these authors appear to be in the right; perhaps not always: but if the lawyers mistake in some particulars, it proves my position still the more strongly; because it demonstrates the powerful prepossession towards antiquity, with which the minds of all our lawyers and legislators, and of all the people whom they wish to influence, have been always filled; and the stationary policy of this kingdom in considering their most sacred rights and franchises as an *inheritance.*

In the famous law of the 3d of Charles I. called the *Petition of Right*, the parliament says to the king, "Your subjects have *inherited* this freedom," claiming their franchises not on abstract principles "as the rights of men," but as the rights of Englishmen, and as a patrimony derived from their forefathers. Selden, and the other profoundly learned men, who drew this petition of right, were as well acquainted, at least, with all the general theories concerning the "rights of men," as any of the discoursers in our pulpits, or on your tribune; full as well as Dr. Price, or as the Abbé Sieyes. But, for reasons worthy of that practical wisdom which superseded their theoretic science, they preferred this positive, recorded, *hereditary* title to all which can be dear to the man and the citizen, to that vague speculative right, which exposed their sure inheritance to be scrambled for and torn to pieces by every wild litigious spirit.

The same policy pervades all the laws which have since been made for the preservation of our liberties. In the 1st of William and Mary, in the famous statute, called the Declaration of Right, the two houses utter not a syllable of "a right to frame a government for themselves." You will see, that their whole care was to secure the religion, laws, and liberties, that had been long possessed, and had been lately endangered. "Taking into their most serious consideration the *best* means for making such an establishment, that their religion, laws, and liberties, might not be in danger of being again subverted,"* they auspicate all their pro-

*1 W. and M.

ceedings, by stating as some of those *best* means, "in the *first place*," to do "as their *ancestors in like cases have usually* done for vindicating their *ancient* rights and liberties, to *declare*;"—and then they pray the king and queen, "that it may be *declared* and enacted, that *all and singular* the rights and liberties *asserted and declared* are the true *ancient* and indubitable rights and liberties of the people of this kingdom."

You will observe, that from magna charta to the declaration of right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert our liberties, as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate specially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any other more general or prior right. By this means our constitution preserves an unity in so great a diversity of its parts. We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a house of commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors.

This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection; or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it. A spirit of innovation is generally the result of a selfish temper and confined views. People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors. Besides, the people of England well know, that the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation, and a sure principle of transmission; without at all excluding a principle of improvement. It leaves acquisition free; but it secures what it acquires. Whatever advantages are obtained by a state proceeding on these maxims, are locked fast as in a sort of family settlement; grasped as in a kind of mortmain for ever. By a constitutional policy, working after the pattern of nature, we receive, we hold, we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are

handed down, to us and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts; wherein, by the disposition of a stupendous wisdom, moulding together the great mysterious incorporation of the human race, the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete. By adhering in this manner and on those principles to our forefathers, we are guided not by the superstition of antiquarians, but by the spirit of philosophic analogy. In this choice of inheritance we have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood; binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties; adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections; keeping inseparable, and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities, our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars.

Through the same plan of a conformity to nature in our artificial institutions, and by calling in the aid of her unerring and powerful instincts, to fortify the fallible and feeble contrivances of our reason, we have derived several other, and those no small benefits, from considering our liberties in the light of an inheritance. Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity. This idea of a liberal descent inspires us with a sense of habitual native dignity, which prevents that upstart insolence almost inevitably adhering to and disgracing those who are the first acquirers of any distinction. By this means our liberty becomes a noble freedom. It carries an imposing and majestic aspect. It has a pedigree and illustrating ancestors.

It has its bearings and its ensigns armorial. It has its gallery of portraits; its monumental inscriptions; its records, evidences, and titles. We procure reverence to our civil institutions on the principle upon which nature teaches us to revere individual men; on account of their age; and on account of those from whom they are descended. All your sophisters cannot produce any thing better adapted to preserve a rational and manly freedom than the course that we have pursued, who have chosen our nature rather than our speculations, our breasts rather than our inventions, for the great conservatories and magazines of our rights and privileges.

You might, if you pleased, have profited of our example, and have given to your recovered freedom a correspondent dignity. Your privileges, though discontinued, were not lost to memory. Your constitution, it is true, whilst you were out of possession, suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected; but you had the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished. In your old states you possessed that variety of parts corresponding with the various descriptions of which your community was happily composed; you had all that combination, and all that opposition of interests, you had that action and counteraction which, in the natural and in the political world, from the reciprocal struggle of discordant powers, draws out the harmony of the universe. These opposed and conflicting interests, which you considered as so great a blemish in your old and in our present constitution, interpose a salutary check to all precipitate resolutions. They render deliberation a matter not of choice, but of necessity; they make all change a subject of *compromise*, which naturally begets moderation; they produce *temperaments*, preventing the sore evil of harsh, crude, unqualified reformations; and rendering all the headlong exertions of arbitrary power, in the few or in the many,

for ever impracticable. Through that diversity of members and interests, general liberty had as many securities as there were separate views in the several orders; whilst, by pressing down the whole by the weight of a real monarchy, the separate parts would have been prevented from warping and starting from their allotted places.

You had all these advantages in your ancient states; but you chose to act as if you had never been moulded into civil society, and had every thing to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising every thing that belonged to you. You set up your trade without a capital. If the last generations of your country appeared without much lustre in your eyes, you might have passed them by, and derived your claims from a more early race of ancestors. Under a pious predilection for those ancestors, your imaginations would have realized in them a standard of virtue and wisdom, beyond the vulgar practice of the hour: and you would have risen with the example to whose imitation you aspired. Respecting your forefathers, you would have been taught to respect yourselves. You would not have chosen to consider the French as a people of yesterday, as a nation of low-born servile wretches until the emancipating year of 1789. In order to furnish, at the expense of your honor, an excuse to your apologists here for several enormities of yours, you would not have been content to be represented as a gang of Maroon slaves, suddenly broke loose from the house of bondage, and therefore to be pardoned for your abuse of the liberty to which you were not accustomed, and were ill fitted. Would it not, my worthy friend, have been wiser to have you thought, what I, for one, always thought you, a generous and gallant nation, long misled to your disadvantage by your high and romantic sentiments of fidelity, honor, and loyalty; that events had been unfavorable to you, but that you were not enslaved through any illiberal or servile disposition; that in your most devoted submission, you were actuated by a principle of public spirit, and that it was your country you worshiped, in the person of your king? Had

you made it to be understood, that in the delusion of this amiable error you had gone further than your wise ancestors; that you were resolved to resume your ancient privileges, whilst you preserved the spirit of your ancient and your recent loyalty and honor; or, if diffident of yourselves, and not clearly discerning the almost obliterated constitution of your ancestors, you had looked to your neighbors in this land, who had kept alive the ancient principles and models of the old common law of Europe, meliorated and adapted to its present state—by following wise examples you would have given new examples of wisdom to the world. You would have rendered the cause of liberty venerable in the eyes of every worthy mind in every nation. You would have shamed despotism from the earth, by shewing that freedom was not only reconcilable, but as, when well disciplined, it is, auxiliary to law. You would have had an unoppressive but a productive revenue. You would have had a flourishing commerce to feed it. You would have had a free constitution; a potent monarchy; a disciplined army; a reformed and venerated clergy; a mitigated but spirited nobility, to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons, to emulate and to recruit that nobility; you would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to seek and to recognise the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind, and not in that monstrous fiction, which, by inspiring false ideas and vain expectations into men destined to travel in the obscure walk of laborious life, serves only to aggravate and embitter that real inequality, which it never can remove; and which the order of civil life establishes as much for the benefit of those whom it must leave in an humble state, as those whom it is able to exalt to a condition more splendid, but not more happy. You had a smooth and easy career of felicity and glory laid open to you, beyond any thing recorded in the history of the world; but you have shewn that difficulty is good for man.

Compute your gains; see what is got by those extravagant and presumptuous speculations which have taught your leaders to despise all their predecessors, and all their contemporaries, and even to despise themselves, until the moment in which they became truly despicable. By following those false lights, France has bought undisguised calamities at a higher price than any nation has purchased the most unequivocal blessings! France has bought poverty by crime! France has not sacrificed her virtue to her interest; but she has abandoned her interest, that she might prostitute her virtue. All other nations have begun the fabric of a new government, or the reformation of an old, by establishing originally, or by enforcing with greater exactness some rites or other of religion. All other people have laid the foundations of civil freedom in severer manners, and a system of a more austere and masculine morality. France, when she let loose the reigns of regal authority, doubled the license of a ferocious dissoluteness in manners, and of an insolent irreligion in opinions and practices; and has extended through all ranks of life, as if she were communicating some privilege, or laying open some secluded benefit, all the unhappy corruptions that usually were the disease of wealth and power. This is one of the new principles of equality in France.

France, by the perfidy of her leaders, has utterly disgraced the tone of lenient council in the cabinets of princes, and disarmed it of its most potent topics. She has sanctified the dark suspicious maxims of tyrannous distrust; and taught kings to tremble at (what will hereafter be called) the delusive plausibilities, of moral politicians. Sovereigns will consider those who advise them to place an unlimited confidence in their people, as subverters of their thrones; as traitors who aim at their destruction, by leading their easy good nature, under specious pretences, to admit combinations of bold and faithless men into a participation of their power. This alone (if there were nothing else) is an irreparable calamity to you and to mankind. Remember that your par-

liament of Paris told your king, that in calling the states together, he had nothing to fear but the prodigal excess of their zeal in providing for the support of the throne. It is right that these men should hide their heads. It is right that they should bear their part in the ruin which their counsel has brought on their sovereign and their country. Such sanguine declarations tend to lull authority asleep; to encourage it rashly to engage in perilous adventures of untried policy; to neglect those provisions, preparations and precautions, which distinguish benevolence from imbecility; and without which no man can answer for the salutary effect of any abstract plan of government or of freedom. For want of these, they have seen the medicine of the state corrupted into its poison. They have seen the French rebel against a mild and lawful monarch, with more fury, outrage, and insult, than ever any people has been known to rise against the most illegal usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant. Their resistance was made to concession; their revolt was from protection; their blow was aimed at a hand holding out graces, favors, and immunities.

This was unnatural. The rest is in order. They have found their punishment in their success. Laws overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigor; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoverished; a church pillaged, and a state not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the constitution of the kingdom; every thing human and divine sacrificed to the idol of public credit, and national bankruptcy the consequence; and to crown all, the paper securities of new, precarious, tottering power, the discredited paper securities of impoverished fraud, and beggared rapine, held out as a currency for the support of an empire, in lieu of the two great recognised species that represent the lasting conventional credit of mankind, which disappeared and hid themselves in the earth from whence they came, when the principle of property, whose creatures and representatives they are, was systematically subverted.

Were all these dreadful things necessary? were they the

inevitable results of the desperate struggle of determined patriots, compelled to wade through blood and tumult, to the quiet shore of a tranquil and prosperous liberty? No! nothing like it. The fresh ruins of France, which shock our feelings wherever we can turn our eyes, are not the devastation of civil war; they are the sad but instructive monuments of rash and ignorant counsel in time of profound peace. They are the display of inconsiderate and presumptuous, because unresisted and irresistible authority. The persons who have thus squandered away the precious treasure of their crimes, the persons who have made this prodigal and wild waste of public evils (the last stake reserved for the ultimate ransom of the state) have met in their progress with little, or rather with no opposition at all. Their whole march was more like a triumphal procession than the progress of a war. Their pioneers have gone before them, and demolished and laid every thing level at their feet. Not one drop of *their* blood have they shed in the cause of the country they have ruined. They have made no sacrifice to their projects of greater consequence than their shoe buckles, whilst they were imprisoning their king, murdering their fellow citizens, and bathing in tears, and plunging in poverty and distress, thousands of worthy men and worthy families. Their cruelty has not even been the base result of fear. It has been the effect of their sense of perfect safety, in authorizing treasons, robberies, rapes, assassinations, slaughters, and burnings, throughout their harassed land. But the cause of all was plain from the beginning.

This unforced choice, this fond election of evil, would appear perfectly unaccountable, if we did not consider the composition of the national assembly; I do not mean its formal constitution, which, as it now stands, is exceptionable enough, but the materials of which, in a great measure, it is composed, which is of ten thousand times greater consequence than all the formalities in the world. If we were to know nothing of this assembly but by its title and function, no colors could paint to the imagination any thing more venera-

ble. In that light the mind of an inquirer, subdued by such an awful image as that of the virtue and wisdom of a whole people collected into one focus, would pause and hesitate in condemning things even of the very worst aspect. Instead of blamable, they would appear only mysterious. But no name, no power, no function, no artificial institution whatsoever, can make the men of whom any system of authority is composed, any other than God, and nature, and education, and their habits of life have made them. Capacities beyond these the people have not to give. Virtue and wisdom may be the objects of their choice; but their choice confers neither the one nor the other on those upon whom they lay their ordaining hands. They have not the engagement of nature, they have not the promise of revelation for any such powers.

After I had read over the list of the persons and descriptions elected into the *Tiers Etat*, nothing which they afterwards did could appear astonishing. Among them, indeed, I saw some of known rank; some of shining talents; but of any practical experience in the state, not one man was to be found. The best were only men of theory. But whatever the distinguished few may have been, it is the substance and mass of the body which constitutes its character, and must finally determine its direction. In all bodies, those who will lead, must also, in a considerable degree, follow. They must conform their propositions to the taste, talent, and disposition of those whom they wish to conduct: therefore, if an assembly is viciously or feebly composed in a very great part of it, nothing but such a supreme degree of virtue as very rarely appears in the world, and for that reason cannot enter into calculation, will prevent the men of talents disseminated through it from becoming only the expert instruments of absurd projects! If, what is the more likely event, instead of that unusual degree of virtue, they should be actuated by sinister ambition, and a lust of meretricious glory, then the feeble part of the assembly, to whom at first they conform, becomes in its turn the dupe and instrument of their

designs. In this political traffic the leaders will be obliged to bow to the ignorance of their followers, and the followers to become subservient to the worst designs of their leaders.

To secure any degree of sobriety to the propositions made by the leaders in any public assembly, they ought to respect, in some degree perhaps to fear, those whom they conduct. To be led any otherwise than blindly, the followers must be qualified, if not for actors, at least for judges; they must also be judges of natural weight and authority. Nothing can secure a steady and moderate conduct in such assemblies, but that the body of them should be respectably composed, in point of condition in life, of permanent property, of education, and of such habits as enlarge and liberalize the understanding.

In the calling of the states general of France, the first thing that struck me, was a great departure from the ancient course. I found the representation for the third estate composed of six hundred persons. They were equal in number to the representatives of both the other orders. If the orders were to act separately, the number would not, beyond the consideration of the expense, be of much moment. But when it became apparent that the three orders were to be melted down into one, the policy and necessary effect of this numerous representation became obvious. A very small desertion from either of the other two orders must throw the power of both into the hands of the third. In fact, the whole power of the state was soon resolved into that body. Its due composition became therefore of infinitely the greater importance.

Judge, sir, of my surprise, when I found that a very great proportion of the assembly (a majority, I believe, of the members who attended,) was composed of practitioners in the law. It was composed, not of distinguished magistrates, who had given pledges to their country of their science, prudence, and integrity; not of leading advocates, the glory of the bar; not of renowned professors in universities; but for the far greater part, as it must in such a number, of the inferior, unlearned, mechanical, merely instrumental members of the profession. There were distinguished exceptions; but the

general composition was of obscure provincial advocates, of stewards of petty local jurisdictions, country attorneys, notaries, and the whole train of the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation. From the moment I read the list, I saw distinctly, and very nearly as it has happened, all that was to follow.

The degree of estimation in which any profession is held becomes the standard of the estimation in which the professors hold themselves. Whatever the personal merits of many individual lawyers might have been, and in many it was undoubtedly very considerable, in that military kingdom, no part of the profession had been much regarded, except the highest of all, who often united to their professional offices great family splendor, and were invested with great power and authority. These certainly were highly respected, and even with no small degree of awe. The next rank was not much esteemed; the mechanical part was in a very low degree of repute.

Whenever the supreme authority is vested in a body so composed, it must evidently produce the consequences of supreme authority placed in the hands of men not taught habitually to respect themselves; who had no previous fortune in character at stake; who could not be expected to bear with moderation, or to conduct with discretion, a power, which they themselves, more than any others, must be surprised to find in their hands. Who could flatter himself that these men, suddenly, and as it were, by enchantment, snatched from the humblest rank of subordination, would not be intoxicated with their unprepared greatness? Who could conceive, that men, who are habitually meddling, daring, subtle, active, of litigious dispositions and unquiet minds, would easily fall back into their old condition of obscure contention, and laborious, low, and unprofitable chicane? Who could doubt but that, at any expense to the state, of which they understood nothing, they must pursue their private interests, which they understood but too well? It was not an event depending on chance or contingency. It was inevitable; it was necessary; it was planted in the nature

of things. They must *join* (if their capacity did not permit them to *lead*) in any project which could procure to them a *litigious constitution;* which could lay open to them those innumerable lucrative jobs which follow in the train of all great convulsions and revolutions in the state, and particularly in all great and violent permutations of property. Was it to be expected that they would attend to the stability of property, whose existence had always depended upon whatever rendered property questionable, ambiguous, and insecure? Their objects would be enlarged with their elevation, but their disposition and habits, and mode of accomplishing their designs, must remain the same.

Well! but these men were to be tempered and restrained by other descriptions, of more sober minds, and more enlarged understandings. Were they then to be awed by the supereminent authority and awful dignity of a handful of country clowns, who have seats in that assembly, some of whom are said not to be able to read and write? and by not a greater number of traders, who, though somewhat more instructed, and more conspicuous in the order of society, had never known any thing beyond their counting-house? No! both these descriptions were more formed to be overborne and swayed by the intrigues and artifices of lawyers, than to become their counterpoise. With such a dangerous disproportion, the whole must needs be governed by them. To the faculty of law was joined a pretty considerable proportion of the faculty of medicine. This faculty had not, any more than that of the law, possessed in France its just estimation. Its professors, therefore, must have the qualities of men not habituated to sentiments of dignity. But supposing they had ranked as they ought to do, and as with us they do actually, the sides of sickbeds are not the academies for forming statesmen and legislators. Then came the dealers in stocks and funds, who must be eager, at any expense, to change their ideal paper wealth for the more solid substance of land. To these were joined men of other descriptions, from whom as little knowledge of or attention to the interests of a great state

was to be expected, and as little regard to the stability of any institution; men formed to be instruments, not controls. Such in general was the composition of the *Tiers Etat* in the national assembly; in which was scarcely to be perceived the slightest traces of what we call the natural landed interest of the country.

We know that the British house of commons, without shutting its doors to any merit in any class, is, by the sure operation of adequate causes, filled with every thing illustrious in rank, in descent, in hereditary and in acquired opulence, in cultivated talents, in military, civil, naval, and politic distinction, that the country can afford. But supposing, what hardly can be supposed as a case, that the house of commons should be composed in the same manner with the *Tiers Etat* in France, would this dominion of chicane be borne with patience, or even conceived without horror? God forbid I should insinuate any thing derogatory to that profession, which is another priesthood, administering the rights of sacred justice. But whilst I revere men in the functions which belong to them, and would do, as much as one man can do, to prevent their exclusion from any, I cannot, to flatter them, give the lie to nature. They are good and useful in the composition; they must be mischievous if they preponderate so as virtually to become the whole. Their very excellence in their peculiar functions may be far from a qualification for others. It cannot escape observation, that when men are too much confined to professional and faculty habits, and, as it were, inveterate in the recurrent employment of that narrow circle, they are rather disabled than qualified for whatever depends on the knowledge of mankind, on experience in mixed affairs, on a comprehensive connected view of the various complicated external and internal interests which go to the formation of that multifarious thing called a state.

After all, if the house of commons were to have an wholly professional and faculty composition, what is the power of the house of commons, circumscribed and shut in by the immovable barriers of laws, usages, positive rules of doctrine and

practice, counterpoised by the house of lords, and every moment of its existence at the discretion of the crown to continue, prorogue, or dissolve us? The power of the house of commons, direct or indirect, is indeed great; and long may it be able to preserve its greatness, and the spirit belonging to true greatness, at the full; and it will do so, as long as it can keep the breakers of law in India from becoming the makers of law for England. The power, however, of the house of commons, when least diminished, is as a drop of water in the ocean, compared to that residing in a settled majority of your national assembly. That assembly, since the destruction of the orders, has no fundamental law, no strict convention, no respected usage to restrain it. Instead of finding themselves obliged to conform to a fixed constitution, they have a power to make a constitution which shall conform to their designs. Nothing in heaven or upon earth can serve as a control on them. What ought to be the heads, the hearts, the dispositions, that are qualified, or that dare, not only to make laws under a fixed constitution, but at one heat to strike out a totally new constitution for a great kingdom, and in every part of it, from the monarch on the throne to the vestry of a parish? But—"*fools rush in where angels fear to tread.*" In such a state of unbounded power, for undefined and undefinable purposes, the evil of a moral and almost physical inaptitude of the man to the function, must be the greatest we can conceive to happen in the management of human affairs.

Having considered the composition of the third estate as it stood in its original frame, I took a view of the representatives of the clergy. There too it appeared, that full as little regard was had to the general security of property, or to the aptitude of the deputies for their public purposes, in the principles of their election. That election was so contrived, as to send a very large proportion of mere country curates to the great and arduous work of new-modeling a state; men who never had seen the state so much as in a picture; men who knew nothing of the world beyond the bounds of an obscure village; who, immersed in hopeless poverty, could regard all property,

whether secular or ecclesiastical, with no other eye than that of envy; among whom must be many, who, for the smallest hope of the meanest dividend in plunder, would readily join in any attempts upon a body of wealth, in which they could hardly look to have any share, except in a general scramble. Instead of balancing the power of the active chicaners in the other assembly, these curates must necessarily become the active coadjutors, or at best the passive instruments of those by whom they had been habitually guided in their petty village concerns. They too could hardly be the most conscientious of their kind, who, presuming upon their incompetent understanding, could intrigue for a trust which led them from their natural relation to their flocks, and their natural spheres of action, to undertake the regeneration of kingdoms. This preponderating weight being added to the force of the body of chicane in the *Tiers Etat*, completed that momentum of ignorance, rashness, presumption, and lust of plunder, which nothing has been able to resist.

To observing men it must have appeared from the beginning, that the majority of the Third Estate, in conjunction with such a deputation from the clergy as I have described, whilst it pursued the destruction of the nobility, would inevitably become subservient to the worst designs of individuals in that class. In the spoil and humiliation of their own order these individuals would possess a sure fund for the pay of their new followers. To squander away the objects which made the happiness of their fellows, would be to them no sacrifice at all. Turbulent, discontented men of quality, in proportion as they are puffed up with personal pride and arrogance, generally despise their own order. One of the first symptoms they discover of a selfish and mischievous ambition, is a profligate disregard of a dignity which they partake with others. To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love to our country and to mankind. The interests of that portion of social

arrangement is a trust in the hands of all those who compose it; and as none but bad men would justify it in abuse, none but traitors would barter it away for their own personal advantage.

There were in the time of our civil troubles in England, (I do not know whether you have any such in your assembly in France) several persons, like the then Earl of Holland, who by themselves or their families had brought an odium on the throne, by the prodigal dispensation of its bounties towards them, who afterwards joined in the rebellions arising from the discontents of which they were themselves the cause; men who helped to subvert that throne to which they owed, some of them, their existence, others all that power which they employed to ruin their benefactor. If any bounds are set to the rapacious demands of that sort of people, or that others are permitted to partake in the objects they would engross, revenge and envy soon fill up the craving void that is left in their avarice. Confounded by the complication of distempered passions, their reason is disturbed; their views become vast and perplexed; to others inexplicable; to themselves uncertain. They find, on all sides, bounds to their unprincipled ambition in any fixed order of things. But in the fog and haze of confusion all is enlarged, and appears without any limit.

When men of rank sacrifice all ideas of dignity to an ambition without a distinct object, and work with low instruments and for low ends, the whole composition becomes low and base. Does not something like this now appear in France? Does it not produce something ignoble and inglorious? a kind of meanness in all the prevalent policy? a tendency in all that is done to lower along with individuals all the dignity and importance of the state? Other revolutions have been conducted by persons, who, whilst they attempted or affected changes in the commonwealth, sanctified their ambition by advancing the dignity of the people whose peace they troubled. They had long views. They aimed at the rule, not at the destruction of their country. They were men of great civil,

and great military talents, and if the terror, the ornament of their age. They were not like Jew brokers contending with each other who could best remedy with fraudulent circulation and depreciated paper the wretchedness and ruin brought on their country by their degenerate councils. The compliment made to one of the great bad men of the old stamp (Cromwell) by his kinsman, a favorite poet of that time, shews what it was he proposed, and what indeed to a great degree he accomplished in the success of his ambition:

> "Still as *you* rise the *state* exalted too,
> Finds no distemper whilst 't is changed by *you;*
> Chang'd like the world's great scene, when without noise
> The rising sun night's *vulgar* lights destroys."

These disturbers were not so much like men usurping power, as asserting their natural place in society. Their rising was to illuminate and beautify the world. Their conquest over their competitors was by outshining them. The hand that, like a destroying angel, smote the country, communicated to it the force and energy under which it suffered. I do not say (God forbid) I do not say, that the virtues of such men were to be taken as a balance to their crimes; but they were some corrective to their effects. Such was, as I said, our Cromwell. Such were your whole race of Guises, Condés, and Colignis. Such the Richelieus, who in more quiet times acted in the spirit of a civil war. Such, as better men, and in a less dubious cause, were your Henry the Fourth and your Sully, though nursed in civil confusions, and not wholly without some of their taint. It is a thing to be wondered at, to see how very soon France, when she had a moment to respire, recovered and emerged from the longest and most dreadful civil war that ever was known in any nation. Why? Because, among all their massacres, they had not slain the *mind* in their country. A conscious dignity, a noble pride, a generous sense of glory and emulation, was not extinguished. On the contrary, it was kindled and inflamed. The organs also of the state, however shattered, existed. All the prizes

of honor and virtue, all the rewards, all the distinctions, remained. But your present confusion, like a palsy, has attacked the fountain of life itself. Every person in your country, in a situation to be actuated by a principle of honor, is disgraced and degraded, and can entertain no sensation of life, except in a mortified and humiliated indignation. But this generation will quickly pass away. The next generation of the nobility will resemble the artificers and clowns, and money-jobbers, usurers and Jews, who will be always their fellows, sometimes their masters. Believe me, sir, those who attempt to level, never equalize. In all societies, consisting of various descriptions of citizens, some description must be uppermost. The levelers therefore only change and pervert the natural order of things; they load the edifice of society, by setting up in the air what the solidity of the structure requires to be on the ground. The associations of tailors and carpenters, of which the republic (of Paris, for instance,) is composed, cannot be equal to the situation, into which by the worst of usurpations, an usurpation on the prerogatives of nature, you attempt to force them.

The chancellor of France at the opening of the states, said, in a tone of oratorical flourish, that all occupations were honorable. If he meant only, that no honest employment was disgraceful, he would not have gone beyond the truth. But in asserting, that any thing is honorable, we imply some distinction in its favor. The occupation of a hair-dresser, or of a working tallow-chandler, cannot be a matter of honor to any person—to say nothing of a number of other more servile employments. Such descriptions of men ought not to suffer oppression from the state; but the state suffers oppression, if such as they, either individually or collectively, are permitted to rule. In this you think you are combating prejudice, but you are at war with nature.*

* Ecclesiasticus, chap. xxxviii. verse 24, 25. "The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure: and he that hath little business shall become wise."—"How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in

I do not, my dear sir, conceive you to be of that sophistical captious spirit, or of that uncandid dulness, as to require, for every general observation or sentiment, an explicit detail of the correctives and exceptions, which reason will presume to be included in all the general propositions which come from reasonable men. You do not imagine, that I wish to confine power, authority, and distinction to blood, and names, and titles. No, sir. There is no qualification for government, but virtue and wisdom, actual or presumptive. Wherever they are actually found, they have, in whatever state, condition, profession or trade, the passport of Heaven to human place and honor. Woe to the country which would madly and impiously reject the service of the talents and virtues, civil, military, or religious, that are given to grace and to serve it; and would condemn to obscurity every thing formed to diffuse lustre and glory around a state. Woe to that country too, that passing into the opposite extreme, considers a low education, a mean contracted view of things, a sordid, mercenary occupation, as a preferable title to command. Every thing ought to be open; but not indifferently to every man. No rotation; no appointment by lot; no mode of election operating in the spirit of sortition or rotation, can be generally good in a government conversant in extensive objects. Because they have no tendency, direct, or indirect, to select the man with a view to the duty, or to accommodate the one to the other. I do not hesitate to say, that the road to eminence and

the goad; that driveth oxen; and is occupied in their labors; and whose talk is of bullocks?"

Ver. 27. "So every carpenter and work-master that laboreth night and day," &c.

Ver. 33. "They shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation: they shall not sit on the judges' seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment: they cannot declare justice and judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken."

Ver. 34. "But they will maintain the state of the world."

I do not determine whether this book be canonical, as the Gallican church (till lately) has considered it, or apocryphal, as here it is taken. I am sure it contains a great deal of sense and truth.

power, from obscure condition, ought not to be made too easy, nor a thing too much of course. If rare merit be the rarest of all rare things, it ought to pass through some sort of probation. The temple of honor ought to be seated on an eminence. If it be opened through virtue, let it be remembered too, that virtue is never tried but by some difficulty and some struggle.

Nothing is a due and adequate representation of a state, that does not represent its ability, as well as its property. But as ability is a vigorous and active principle, and as property is sluggish, inert and timid, it never can be safe from the invasions of ability, unless it be, out of all proportion, predominant in the representation. It must be represented too in great masses of accumulation, or it is not rightly protected. The characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be *unequal*. The great masses therefore which excite envy, and tempt rapacity, must be put out of the possibility of danger. Then they form a natural rampart about the lesser properties in all their gradations. The same quantity of property, which is by the natural course of things divided among many, has not the same operation. Its defensive power is weakened as it is diffused. In this diffusion each man's portion is less than what, in the eagerness of his desires, he may flatter himself to obtain by dissipating the accumulations of others. The plunder of the few would indeed give but a share inconceivably small in the distribution to the many. But the many are not capable of making this calculation; and those who lead them to rapine, never intend this distribution.

The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself. It makes our weakness subservient to our virtue; it grafts benevolence even upon avarice. The possessors of family wealth, and of the distinction which attends hereditary possession (as most concerned in it) are the natural securities for this transmission. With us, the house of peers is

formed upon this principle. It is wholly composed of hereditary property and hereditary distinction; and made therefore the third of the legislature; and in the last event, the sole judge of all property in all its subdivisions. The house of commons too, though not necessarily, yet in fact, is always so composed in the far greater part. Let those large proprietors be what they will, and they have their chance of being among the best, they are at the very worst, the ballast in the vessel of the commonwealth. For though hereditary wealth, and the rank which goes with it, are too much idolized by creeping sycophants, and the blind abject admirers of power, they are too rashly slighted in shallow speculations of the petulant, assuming, short-sighted coxcombs of philosophy. Some decent regulated preëminence, some preference (not exclusive appropriation) given to birth, is neither unnatural, nor unjust, nor impolitic.

It is said, that twenty-four millions ought to prevail over two hundred thousand. True; if the constitution of a kingdom be a problem of arithmetic. This sort of discourse does well enough with the lamp-post for its second: to men who *may* reason calmly, it is ridiculous. The will of the many, and their interest, must very often differ; and great will be the difference when they make an evil choice. A government of five hundred country attorneys and obscure curates is not good for twenty-four millions of men, though it were chosen by eight and forty millions; nor is it the better for being guided by a dozen of persons of quality, who have betrayed their trust in order to obtain that power. At present, you seem in every thing to have strayed out of the high-road of nature. The property of France does not govern it. Of course property is destroyed, and rational liberty has no existence. All you have got for the present is a paper circulation, and a stock-jobbing constitution: and as to the future, do you seriously think that the territory of France, upon the republican system of eighty-three independent municipalities (to say nothing of the parts that compose them) can ever be governed as one body, or can ever be set in motion by the

impulse of one mind? When the national assembly has completed its work, it will have accomplished its ruin. These commonwealths will not long bear a state of subjection to the republic of Paris. They will not bear that this one body should monopolize the captivity of the king, and the dominion over the assembly calling itself national. Each will keep its own portion of the spoil of the church to itself; and it will not suffer either that spoil, or the more just fruits of their industry, or the natural produce of their soil, to be sent to swell the insolence, or pamper the luxury of the mechanics of Paris. In this they will see none of the equality, under the pretence of which they have been tempted to throw off their allegiance to their sovereign, as well as the ancient constitution of their country. There can be no capital city in such a constitution as they have lately made. They have forgot, that when they framed democratic governments, they had virtually dismembered their country. The person whom they persevere in calling king, has not power left to him by the hundredth part sufficient to hold together this collection of republics. The republic of Paris will endeavor indeed to complete the debauchery of the army, and illegally to perpetuate the assembly, without resort to its constituents, as the means of continuing its despotism. It will make efforts, by becoming the heart of a boundless paper circulation, to draw every thing to itself; but in vain. All this policy in the end will appear as feeble as it is now violent.

If this be your actual situation, compared to the situation to which you were called, as it were, by the voice of God and man, I cannot find it in my heart to congratulate you on the choice you have made, or the success which has attended your endeavors. I can as little recommend to any other nation a conduct grounded on such principles, and productive of such effects. That I must leave to those who can see further into your affairs than I am able to do, and who best know how far your actions are favorable to their designs. The gentlemen of the revolution society, who were so early in their congratulations, appear to be strongly of opinion that there is

some scheme of politics, relative to this country, in which your proceedings may, in some way, be useful. For your Dr. Price, who seems to have speculated himself into no small degree of fervor upon this subject, addresses his auditors in the following very remarkable words: "I cannot conclude without recalling *particularly* to your recollection a consideration which I have *more than once alluded to*, and which probably your thoughts have *been all along anticipating;* a consideration with which my *mind is impressed more than I can express.* I mean the consideration of the *favorableness of the present times to all exertions in the cause of liberty.*"

It is plain that the mind of this *political* preacher was at the time big with some extraordinary design; and it is very probable that the thoughts of his audience, who understood him better than I do, did all along run before him in his reflection, and in the whole train of consequences to which it led.

Before I read that sermon, I really thought I had lived in a free country; and it was an error I cherished, because it gave me a greater liking to the country I lived in. I was indeed aware, that a jealous, ever-waking vigilance, to guard the treasure of our liberty, not only from invasion, but from decay and corruption, was our best wisdom and our first duty. However, I considered that treasure rather as a possession to be secured than as a prize to be contended for. I did not discern how the present time came to be so very favorable to all *exertions* in the cause of freedom. The present time differs from any other only by the circumstance of what is doing in France. If the example of that nation is to have an influence on this, I can easily conceive why some of their proceedings which have an unpleasant aspect, and are not quite reconcilable to humanity, generosity, good faith, and justice, are palliated with so much milky good nature towards the actors, and borne with so much heroic fortitude towards the sufferers. It is certainly not prudent to discredit the authority of an example we mean to follow. But allowing this, we are led to a very natural question;—What is that cause of liberty, and what are those exertions

in its favor, to which the example of France is so singularly auspicious? Is our monarchy to be annihilated, with all the laws, all the tribunals, and all the ancient corporations of the kingdom? Is every landmark of the country to be done away in favor of a geometrical and arithmetical constitution? Is the house of lords to be voted useless? Is episcopacy to be abolished? Are the church lands to be sold to Jews and jobbers; or given to bribe new-invented municipal republics into a participation in sacrilege? Are all the taxes to be voted grievances, and the revenue reduced to a patriotic contribution, or patriotic presents? Are silver shoe-buckles to be substituted in the place of the land tax and the malt tax, for the support of the naval strength of this kingdom? Are all orders, ranks, and distinctions to be confounded, that out of universal anarchy, joined to national bankruptcy, three or four thousand democracies should be formed into eighty-three, and that they may all, by some sort of unknown attractive power, be organized into one? For this great end is the army to be seduced from its discipline and its fidelity, first by every kind of debauchery, and then by the terrible precedent of a donative in the increase of pay? Are the curates to be seduced from their bishops, by holding out to them the delusive hope of a dole out of the spoils of their own order? Are the citizens of London to be drawn from their allegiance by feeding them at the expense of their fellow-subjects? Is a compulsory paper currency to be substituted in the place of the legal coin of this kingdom? Is what remains of the plundered stock of public revenue to be employed in the wild project of maintaining two armies to watch over and to fight with each other? If these are the ends and means of the revolution society, I admit they are well assorted; and France may furnish them for both with precedents in point.

I see that your example is held out to shame us. I know that we are supposed a dull sluggish race, rendered passive by finding our situation tolerable, and prevented by a mediocrity of freedom from ever attaining to its full perfection. Your

leaders in France began by affecting to admire, almost to adore, the British constitution; but, as they advanced, they came to look upon it with a sovereign contempt. The friends of your national assembly amongst us have full as mean an opinion of what was formerly thought the glory of their country. The revolution society has discovered that the English nation is not free. They are convinced that the inequality in our representation is a "defect in our constitution *so gross and palpable*, as to make it excellent chiefly in *form* and *theory*."* That a representation in the legislature of a kingdom is not only the basis of all constitutional liberty in it, but of "*all legitimate government*; that without it a *government* is nothing but an *usurpation*;"—that "when the representation is *partial*, the kingdom possesses liberty only *partially*; and if extremely partial, it gives only a *semblance*; and if not only extremely partial, but corruptly chosen, it becomes a *nuisance*." Dr. Price considers this inadequacy of representation as our *fundamental grievance*; and though, as to the corruption of this semblance of representation, he hopes it is not yet arrived to its full perfection of depravity; he fears that "nothing will be done towards gaining for us this *essential blessing*, until some *great abuse of power* again provokes our resentment, or some *great calamity* again alarms our fears, or perhaps till the acquisition of a *pure and equal representation by other countries*, whilst we are *mocked* with the *shadow*, kindles our shame." To this he subjoins a note in these words: "A representation, chosen chiefly by the treasury, and a *few* thousand of the *dregs* of the people, who are generally paid for their votes."

You will smile here at the consistency of those democratists, who, when they are not on their guard, treat the humbler part of the community with the greatest contempt, whilst, at the same time, they pretend to make them the depositaries of all power. It would require a long discourse to point out to you the many fallacies that lurk in the generality and equivo-

* Discourse on the Love of our Country, 3d edit. p. 39.

cal nature of the terms "inadequate representation." I shall only say here, in justice to that old-fashioned constitution, under which we have long prospered, that our representation has been found perfectly adequate to all the purposes for which a representation of the people can be desired or devised. I defy the enemies of our constitution to shew the contrary. To detail the particulars in which it is found so well to promote its ends, would demand a treatise on our practical constitution. I state here the doctrine of the revolutionists, only that you and others may see, what an opinion these gentlemen entertain of the constitution of their country, and why they seem to think that some great abuse of power, or some great calamity, as giving a chance for the blessings of a constitution according to their ideas, would be much palliated to their feelings; you see *why they* are so much enamored of your fair and equal representation, which being once obtained, the same effects might follow. You see they consider our house of commons as only "a semblance," "a form," "a theory," "a shadow," "a mockery," perhaps "a nuisance."

These gentlemen value themselves on being systematic; and not without reason. They must therefore look on this gross and palpable defect of representation, this fundamental grievance (so they call it) as a thing not only vicious in itself, but as rendering our whole government absolutely *illegitimate*, and not at all better than a downright *usurpation*. Another revolution to get rid of this illegitimate and usurped government, would of course be perfectly justifiable, if not absolutely necessary. Indeed their principle, if you observe it with any attention, goes much further than to an alteration in the election of the house of commons; for, if popular representation, or choice, is necessary to the *legitimacy* of all government, the house of lords is, at one stroke, bastardized and corrupted in blood. That house is no representative of the people at all, even in "semblance or in form." The case of the crown is altogether as bad. In vain the crown may endeavor to screen itself against these gentlemen by the authority of the establishment made on the revolution. The revolution which is re-

sorted to for a title, on their system, wants a title itself. The revolution is built, according to their theory, upon a basis not more solid than our present formalities, as it was made by a house of lords not representing any one but themselves; and by a house of commons exactly such as the present, that is, as they term it, by a mere "shadow and mockery" of representation.

Something they must destroy, or they seem to themselves to exist for no purpose. One set is for destroying the civil power through the ecclesiastical; another for demolishing the ecclesiastic through the civil. They are aware that the worst consequences might happen to the public in accomplishing this double ruin of church and state; but they are so heated with their theories, that they give more than hints, that this ruin, with all the mischiefs that must lead to it and attend it, and which to themselves appear quite certain, would not be unacceptable to them, or very remote from their wishes. A man amongst them of great authority, and certainly of great talents, speaking of a supposed alliance between church and state, says, "perhaps *we must wait for the fall of the civil powers* before this most unnatural alliance be broken. Calamitous no doubt will that time be. But what convulsion in the political world ought to be a subject of lamentation, if it be attended with so desirable an effect?" You see with what a steady eye these gentlemen are prepared to view the greatest calamities which can befall their country!

It is no wonder therefore, that with these ideas of every thing in their constitution and government at home, either in church or state, as illegitimate and usurped, or at best as a vain mockery, they look abroad with an eager and passionate enthusiasm. Whilst they are possessed by these notions, it is vain to talk to them of the practice of their ancestors, the fundamental laws of their country, the fixed form of a constitution, whose merits are confirmed by the solid test of long experience, and an increasing public strength and national prosperity. They despise experience as the wisdom of unlettered men; and as for the rest, they have

wrought under-ground a mine that will blow up at one grand explosion all examples of antiquity, all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament. They have "the rights of men." Against these there can be no prescription; against these no argument is binding: these admit no temperament, and no compromise: any thing withheld from their full demand is so much of fraud and injustice. Against these their rights of men let no government look for security in the length of its continuance, or in the justice and lenity of its administration. The objections of these speculatists, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid against such an old and beneficent government as against the most violent tyranny, or the greenest usurpation. They are always at issue with governments, not on a question of abuse, but a question of competency, and a question of title. I have nothing to say to the clumsy subtilty of their political metaphysics. Let them be their amusement in the schools.—"Illa *se jactat in aula—Æolus, et clauso ventorum carcere regnet.*"—But let them not break prison to burst like a *Levanter*, to sweep the earth with their hurricane, and to break up the fountains of the great deep to overwhelm us.

Far am I from denying in theory; full as far is my heart from withholding in practice (if I were of power to give or to withhold) the *real* rights of men. In denying their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real, and are such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right. It is an institution of beneficence; and law itself is only beneficence acting by a rule. Men have a right to live by that rule; they have a right to justice; as between their fellows, whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry; and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents; to the nourishment and improvement of their off-

spring; to instruction in life, and to consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do, without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favor. In this partnership all men have equal rights; but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership, has as good a right to it, as he that has five hundred pounds has to his larger proportion. But he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint stock; and as to the share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention.

If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial, or executory power, are its creatures. They can have no being in any other state of things; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil society, rights which do not so much as suppose its existence? Rights which are absolutely repugnant to it? One of the first motives to civil society, and which becomes one of its fundamental rules, is, *that no man should be judge in his own cause.* By this each person has at once divested himself of the first fundamental right of uncovenanted man, that is, to judge for himself, and to assert his own cause. He abdicates all right to be his own governor. He inclusively, in a great measure abandons the right of self-defence, the first law of nature. Men cannot enjoy the rights of an uncivil and of a civil state together. That he may obtain justice, he gives up his right of determining, what it is in points the most essential to him. That he may secure some liberty, he makes a surrender in trust of the whole of it.

Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it; and exist in much greater clearness, and in a much greater degree of abstract perfection: but their abstract perfection is their practical defeat. By having a right to every thing, they want every thing. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human *wants*. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but that even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themselves;* and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and subdue. In this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights. But as the liberties and the restrictions vary with times and circumstances, and admit of infinite modifications, they cannot be settled upon any abstract rule; and nothing is so foolish as to discuss them upon that principle.

The moment you abate any thing from the full rights of men, each to govern himself, and suffer any artificial positive limitation upon those rights, from that moment the whole organization of government becomes a consideration of convenience. This it is which makes the constitution of a state, and the due distribution of its powers, a matter of the most delicate and complicated skill. It requires a deep knowledge of human nature and human necessities, and of the things which facilitate or obstruct the various ends which are to be pursued by the mechanism of civil institutions. The state is to have recruits to its strength, and remedies to its distempers. What is the use of discussing a man's abstract right to food or medicine? The question is upon the method of procuring and administering them. In that deliberation I

shall always advise to call in the aid of the farmer and the physician, rather than the professor of metaphysics.

The science of constructing a commonwealth, or renovating it, or reforming it, is, like every other experimental science, not to be taught *à priori*. Nor is it a short experience that can instruct us in that practical science; because the real effects of moral causes are not always immediate; but that which in the first instance is prejudicial may be excellent in its remoter operation; and its excellence may arise even from the ill effects it produces in the beginning. The reverse also happens; and very plausible schemes, with very pleasing commencements, have often shameful and lamentable conclusions. In states there are often some obscure and almost latent causes, things which appear at first view of little moment, on which a very great part of its prosperity or adversity may most essentially depend. The science of government being therefore so practical in itself, and intended for such practical purposes, a matter which requires experience, and even more experience than any person can gain in his whole life, however sagacious and observing he may be, it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again, without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes.

These metaphysic rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction. The nature of man is intricate; the objects of society are of the greatest possible complexity: and therefore no simple disposition or direction of power can be suitable either to man's nature, or to the quality of his affairs. When I hear the simplicity of contrivance aimed at and

boasted of in any new political constitutions, I am at no loss to decide that the artificers are grossly ignorant of their trade, or totally negligent of their duty. The simple governments are fundamentally defective, to say no worse of them. If you were to contemplate society in but one point of view, all these simple modes of polity are infinitely captivating. In effect each would answer its single end much more perfectly than the more complex is able to attain all its complex purposes. But it is better that the whole should be imperfectly and anomalously answered, than that, while some parts are provided for with great exactness, others might be totally neglected, or perhaps materially injured, by the over-care of a favorite member.

The pretended rights of these theorists are all extremes; and in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false. The rights of men are in a sort of *middle*, incapable of definition, but not impossible to be discerned. The rights of men in governments are their advantages; and these are often in balances between differences of good; in compromises sometimes between good and evil, and sometimes, between evil and evil. Political reason is a computing principle; adding, substracting, multiplying, and dividing, morally and not metaphysically or mathematically, true moral denominations.

By these theorists the right of the people is almost always sophistically confounded with their power. The body of the community, whenever it can come to act, can meet with no effectual resistance; but till power and right are the same, the whole body of them has no right inconsistent with virtue, and the first of all virtues, prudence. Men have no right to what is not reasonable, and to what is not for their benefit; for though a pleasant writer said, *Liceat, perire poetis*, when one of them, in cold blood, is said to have leaped into the flames of a volcanic revolution, *Ardentem frigidus Ætnam insiluit*, I consider such a frolic rather as an unjustifiable poetic license, than as one of the franchises of Parnassus; and whether he were poet or divine, or politician, that chose to

exercise this kind of right, I think that more wise, because more charitable thoughts would urge me rather to save the man, than to preserve his brazen slippers as the monuments of his folly.

The kind of anniversary sermons, to which a great part of what I write refers, if men are not shamed out of their present course, in commemorating the fact, will cheat many out of the principles, and deprive them of the benefits of the revolution they commemorate. I confess to you, sir, I never liked this continual talk of resistance and revolution, or the practice of making the extreme medicine of the constitution its daily bread. It renders the habit of society dangerously valetudinary: it is taking periodical doses of mercury sublimate, and swallowing down repeated provocatives of canthárides to our love of liberty.

This distemper of remedy, grown habitual, relaxes and wears out, by a vulgar and prostituted use, the spring of that spirit which is to be exerted on great occasions. It was in the most patient spirit of Roman servitude that themes of tyrannicide made the ordinary exercise of boys at school—*cum perimit sævos classis numerosa tyrannos.* In the ordinary state of things, it produces in a country like ours the worst effects, even on the cause of that liberty which it abuses with the dissoluteness of an extravagant speculation. Almost all the high-bred republicans of my time have, after a short space, become the most decided, thorough-paced courtiers; they soon left the business of a tedious, moderate, but practical resistance, to those of us whom, in the pride and intoxication of their theories, they have slighted as not much better than tories. Hypocrisy, of course, delights in the most sublime speculations; for, never intending to go beyond speculation, it costs nothing to have it magnificent. But even in cases where rather levity than fraud was to be suspected in these ranting speculations, the issue has been much the same. These professors, finding their extreme principles not applicable to cases which call only for a qualified, or, as I may say, civil, and legal resistance, in such cases employ no re-

sistance at all. It is with them a war or a revolution, or it is nothing. Finding their schemes of politics not adapted to the state of the world in which they live, they often come to think lightly of all public principle; and are ready, on their part, to abandon for a very trivial interest what they find of very trivial value. Some indeed are of more steady and persevering natures; but these are eager politicians out of parliament, who have little to tempt them to abandon their favorite projects. They have some change in the church or state, or both, constantly in their view. When that is the case, they are always bad citizens, and perfectly unsure connections. For, considering their speculative designs as of infinite value, and the actual arrangement of the state as of no estimation, they are at best indifferent about it. They see no merit in the good, and no fault in the vicious management of public affairs; they rather rejoice in the latter, as more propitious to revolution. They see no merit or demerit in any man, or any action, or any political principle, any further than as they may forward or retard their design of change: they therefore take up, one day, the most violent and stretched prerogative, and another time the wildest democratic ideas of freedom, and pass from the one to the other without any sort of regard to cause, to person, or to party.

In France you are now in the crisis of a revolution, and in the transit from one form of government to another—you cannot see that character of men exactly in the same situation in which we see it in this country. With us it is militant; with you it is triumphant; and you know how it can act when its power is commensurate to its will. I would not be supposed to confine those observations to any description of men, or to comprehend all men of any description within them—No! far from it. I am as incapable of that injustice, as I am of keeping terms with those who profess principles of extremes; and who, under the name of religion, teach little else than wild and dangerous politics. The worst of these politics of revolution is this: they temper and harden the breast, in order to prepare it for the desperate strokes

which are sometimes used in extreme occasions. But as these occasions may never arrive, the mind receives a gratuitous taint; and the moral sentiments suffer not a little, when no political purpose is served by the depravation. This sort of people are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgot his nature. Without opening one new avenue to the understanding, they have succeeded in stopping up those that lead to the heart. They have perverted in themselves, and in those that attend to them, all the well-placed sympathies of the human breast.

This famous sermon of the Old Jewry breathes nothing but this spirit through all the political part. Plots, massacres, assassinations, seem to some people a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years security, and the still unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher found them all in the French revolution. This inspires a juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration, it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the Pisgah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture:

"What an eventful period is this! I am *thankful* that I have lived to it; I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* I have lived to see a *diffusion* of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see *the rights of men* better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see *thirty millions of people*, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice. *Their king led in triumph*,

and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects."*

Before I proceed further, I have to remark, that Dr. Price seems rather to overvalue the great acquisitions of light which he has obtained and diffused in this age. The last century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price; and some of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly as he has done in the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters, for high treason, it was deposed, that when king Charles was brought to London for his trial, the Apostle of Liberty in that day conducted the *triumph*. "I saw," says the witness, "his majesty in the coach with six horses, and Peters riding before the king *triumphing*." Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a discovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the king's trial, this precursor, the same Dr. Peters, concluding a long prayer at the royal chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chosen his place) said, "I have prayed and preached these twenty years; and now I may say with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*"† Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himself a sacrifice to the triumph which he led as pontiff. They dealt at the restoration, perhaps, too hardly with this poor good man. But we owe it to his memory and his sufferings, that he had as much illumination, and as much zeal, and had as effectually

* Another of these reverend gentlemen, who was witness to some of the spectacles which Paris has lately exhibited, expresses himself thus:—"*A king dragged in submissive triumph by his conquering subjects*, is one of those appearances of grandeur which seldom rise in the prospect of human affairs, and which, during the remainder of my life, I shall think of with wonder and gratification." These gentlemen agree marvelously in their feelings.

† State Trials, vol. ii. p. 360, 363.

undermined all *the superstition and error* which might impede the great business he was engaged in, as any who follow and repeat after him, in this age, which would assume to itself an exclusive title to the knowledge of the rights of men, and all the glorious consequences of that knowledge.

After this sally of the preacher of the Old Jewry, which differs only in place and time, but agrees perfectly with the spirit and letter of the rapture of 1648, the revolution society, the fabricators of governments, the heroic band of *cashierers* of *monarchs*, electors of sovereigns, and leaders of kings in triumph, strutting with a proud consciousness of the diffusion of knowledge, of which every member had obtained so large a share in the donative, were in haste to make a generous diffusion of the knowledge they had thus gratuitously received. To make this bountiful communication, they adjourned from the church in the Old Jewry, to the London Tavern; where the same Dr. Price, in whom the fumes of his oracular tripod were not entirely evaporated, moved and carried the resolution, or address of congratulation, transmitted by lord Stanhope to the national assembly of France.

I find a preacher of the gospel profaning the beautiful and prophetic ejaculation, commonly called "*nunc dimittis*," made on the first presentation of our Savior in the temple, and applying it, with an inhuman and unnatural rapture, to the most horrid, atrocious, and afflicting spectacle that perhaps ever was exhibited to the pity and indignation of mankind. This "*leading in triumph*," a thing in its best form unmanly and irreligious, which fills our preacher with such unhallowed transports, must shock, I believe, the moral taste of every well-born mind. Several English were the stupefied and indignant spectators of that triumph. It was (unless we have been strangely deceived) a spectacle more resembling a procession of American savages, entering into Onondaga, after some of their murders called victories, and leading into hovels hung round with scalps, their captives overpowered with the scoffs and buffets of women as ferocious as themselves, much more than it resembled the triumphal pomp of a civilized martial

nation;—if a civilized nation, or any men who had a sense of generosity, were capable of a personal triumph over the fallen and afflicted.

This, my dear sir, was not the triumph of France. I must believe that, as a nation, it overwhelmed you with shame and horror. I must believe that the national assembly find themselves in a state of the greatest humiliation in not being able to punish the authors of this triumph, or the actors in it; and that they are in a situation in which any inquiry they may make upon the subject, must be destitute even of the appearance of liberty or impartiality. The apology of that assembly is found in their situation; but when we approve what they *must* bear, it is in us the degenerate choice of a vitiated mind.

With a compelled appearance of deliberation, they vote under the dominion of a stern necessity. They sit in the heart, as it were, of a foreign republic; they have their residence in a city whose constitution has emanated neither from the charter of their king, nor from their legislative power. There they are surrounded by an army not raised either by the authority of their crown, or by their command; and which, if they should order to dissolve itself, would instantly dissolve them. There they sit, after a gang of assassins had driven away some hundreds of the members; whilst those who held the same moderate principles, with more patience or better hope, continued every day exposed to outrageous insults and murderous threats. There a majority, sometimes real, sometimes pretended, captive itself, compels a captive king to issue as royal edicts, at third hand, the polluted nonsense of their most licentious and giddy coffee houses. It is notorious, that all their measures are decided before they are debated. It is beyond doubt, that under the terror of the bayonet, and the lamp-post, and the torch to their houses, they are obliged to adopt all the crude and desperate measures suggested by clubs composed of a monstrous medley of all conditions, tongues, and nations. Among these are found persons, in comparison of whom Cataline would be thought

scrupulous, and Cethegus a man of sobriety and moderation. Nor is it in these clubs alone that public measures are deformed into monsters. They undergo a previous distortion in academies, intended as so many seminaries for these clubs, which are set up in all the places of public resort. In these meetings of all sorts, every counsel, in proportion as it is daring, and violent, and perfidious, is taken for the mark of superior genius. Humanity and compassion are ridiculed as the fruits of superstition and ignorance. Tenderness to individuals is considered as treason to the public. Liberty is always to be estimated perfect as property is rendered insecure. Amidst assassination, massacre, and confiscation, perpetrated or meditated, they are forming plans for the good order of future society. Embracing in their arms the carcasses of base criminals, and promoting their relations on the title of their offences, they drive hundreds of virtuous persons to the same end, by forcing them to subsist by beggary or by crime.

The assembly, their organ, acts before them the farce of deliberation with as little decency as liberty. They act like the comedians of a fair before a riotous audience; they act amidst the tumultuous cries of a mixed mob of ferocious men, and of women lost to shame, who, according to their insolent fancies, direct, control, applaud, explode them; and sometimes mix and take their seats amongst them; domineering over them with a strange mixture of servile petulance and proud presumptuous authority. As they have inverted order in all things, the gallery is in the place of the house. This assembly, which overthrows kings and kingdoms, has not even the physiognomy and aspect of a grave legislative body—*nec color imperii, nec frons erat ulla senatus.* They have a power given to them, like that of the evil principle, to subvert and destroy; but none to construct, except such machines as may be fitted for further subversion and further destruction.

Who is it that admires, and from the heart is attached to national representative assemblies, but must turn with hor-

ror and disgust from such a profane burlesque, and abominable perversion of that sacred institute? Lovers of monarchy, lovers of republics, must alike abhor it. The members of your assembly must themselves groan under the tyranny of which they have all the shame, none of the direction, and little of the profit. I am sure many of the members who compose even the majority of that body must feel as I do, notwithstanding the applauses of the revolution society. Miserable king! miserable assembly! How must that assembly be silently scandalized with those of their members, who could call a day which seemed to blot the sun out of heaven, "*un beau jour!*"* How must they be inwardly indignant at hearing others, who thought fit to declare to them, "that the vessel of the state would fly forward in her course towards regeneration with more speed than ever," from the stiff gale of treason and murder, which preceded our preacher's triumph! What must they have felt, whilst, with outward patience and inward indignation, they heard of the slaughter of innocent gentlemen in their houses, that "the blood spilled was not the most pure?" What must they have felt, when they were besieged by complaints of disorders which shook their country to its foundations, at being compelled coolly to tell the complainants, that they were under the protection of the law, and that they would address the king (the captive king) to cause the laws to be enforced for their protection; when the enslaved ministers of that captive king had formally notified to them, that there were neither law, nor authority, nor power left to protect? What must they have felt at being obliged, as a felicitation on the present new year, to request their captive king to forget the stormy period of the last, on account of the great good which *he* was likely to produce to his people; to the complete attainment of which good they adjourned the practical demonstrations of their loyalty, assuring him of their obedience, when he should no longer possess any authority to command?

* 6th of October, 1789.

This address was made with much good-nature and affection to be sure. But among the revolutions in France must be reckoned a considerable revolution in their ideas of politeness. In England we are said to learn manners at second-hand from your side of the water, and that we dress our behavior in the frippery of France. If so, we are still in the old cut; and have not so far conformed to the new Parisian mode of good-breeding, as to think it quite in the most refined strain of delicate compliment (whether in condolence or congratulation) to say, to the most humiliated creature that crawls upon the earth, that great public benefits are derived from the murder of his servants, the attempted assassination of himself and of his wife, and the mortification, disgrace, and degradation, that he has personally suffered. It is a topic of consolation which our ordinary of Newgate would be too humane to use to a criminal at the foot of the gallows. I should have thought that the hangman of Paris, now that he is liberalized by the vote of the national assembly, and is allowed his rank and arms in the herald's college of the rights of men, would be too generous, too gallant a man, too full of the sense of his new dignity, to employ that cutting consolation to any of the persons whom the *lexe nation* might bring under the administration of his *executive power*.

A man is fallen indeed, when he is thus flattered. The anodyne draught of oblivion, thus drugged, is well calculated to preserve a galling wakefulness, and to feed the living ulcer of a corroding memory. Thus to administer the opiate potion of amnesty, powdered with all the ingredients of scorn and contempt, is to hold to his lips, instead of "the balm of hurt minds," the cup of human misery full to the brim, and to force him to drink it to the dregs.

Yielding to reasons, at least as forcible as those which were so delicately urged in the compliment on the new year, the king of France will probably endeavor to forget these events and that compliment. But History, who keeps a durable record of all our acts, and exercises her awful censure over

the proceedings of all sorts of sovereigns, will not forget either those events, or the era of this liberal refinement in the intercourse of mankind. History will record, that on the morning of the 6th of October, 1789, the king and queen of France, after a day of confusion, alarm, dismay, and slaughter, lay down, under the pledged security of public faith, to indulge nature in a few hours of respite, and troubled melancholy repose. From this sleep the queen was first startled by the voice of the sentinel at her door, who cried out to her, to save herself by flight—that this was the last proof of fidelity he could give—that they were upon him, and he was dead. Instantly he was cut down. A band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with his blood, rushed into the chamber of the queen, and pierced with a hundred strokes of bayonets and poniards the bed, from whence this persecuted woman had but just time to fly almost naked, and through ways unknown to the murderers had escaped to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband, not secure of his own life for a moment.

This king, to say no more of him, and this queen, and their infant children (who once would have been the pride and hope of a great and generous people) were then forced to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre, and strewed with scattered limbs and mutilated carcasses. Thence they were conducted into the capital of their kingdom. Two had been selected from the unprovoked, unresisted, promiscuous slaughter, which was made of the gentlemen of birth and family who composed the king's body guard. These two gentlemen, with all the parade of an execution of justice, were cruelly and publicly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were stuck upon spears, and led the procession; whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused

shape of the vilest of women. After they had been made to taste, drop by drop, more than the bitterness of death, in the slow torture of a journey of twelve miles, protracted to six hours, they were, under a guard, composed of those very soldiers who had thus conducted them through this famous triumph, lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris, now converted into a Bastile for kings.

Is this a triumph to be consecrated at altars? to be commemorated with grateful thanksgiving? to be offered to the divine humanity with fervent prayer and enthusiastic ejaculation?—These Theban and Thracian orgies, acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry, I assure you, kindle prophetic enthusiasm in the minds but of very few people in this kingdom; although a saint and apostle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has so completely vanquished all the mean superstitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in an holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before not worse announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of shepherds.

At first I was at a loss to account for this fit of unguarded transport. I knew, indeed, that the sufferings of monarchs make a delicious repast to some sort of palates. There were reflections which might serve to keep this appetite within some bounds of temperance. But when I took one circumstance into my consideration, I was obliged to confess, that much allowance ought to be made for the society, and that the temptation was too strong for common discretion; I mean, the circumstance of the Io Pæan of the triumph, the animating cry which called "for *all* the BISHOPS to be hanged on the lamp-posts,"* might well have brought forth a burst of enthusiasm on the foreseen consequences of this happy day. I allow to so much enthusiasm some little deviation from prudence. I allow this prophet to break forth into hymns of joy

* Tous les Evêques à la lanterne.

and thanksgiving on an event which appears like the precursor of the Millennium, and the projected fifth monarchy, in the destruction of all church establishments. There was, however, (as in all human affairs there is) in the midst of this joy something to exercise the patience of these worthy gentlemen, and to try the long suffering of their faith. The actual murder of the king and queen, and their child, was wanting to the other auspicious circumstances of this "*beautiful day.*" The actual murder of the bishops, though called for by so many holy ejaculations, was also wanting. A group of regicide and sacrilegious slaughter, was indeed boldly sketched, but it was only sketched. It unhappily was left unfinished, in this great history-piece of the massacre of innocents. What hardy pencil of a great master, from the school of the rights of men, will finish it, is to be seen hereafter. The age has not yet the complete benefit of that diffusion of knowledge that has undermined superstition and error; and the king of France wants another object or two, to consign to oblivion, in consideration of all the good which is to arise from his own sufferings, and the patriotic crimes of an enlightened age.*

* It is proper here to refer to a letter written upon this subject by an eye witness. That eye-witness was one of the most honest, intelligent, and eloquent members of the national assembly, one of the most active and zealous reformers of the state. He was obliged to secede from the assembly; and he afterwards became a voluntary exile, on account of the horrors of this pious triumph, and the dispositions of men, who, profiting of crimes, if not causing them, have taken the lead in public affairs.

Extract of M. de Lally Tollendal's Second Letter to a Friend.

"Parlons du parti que j'ai pris; Il est bien justifié dans ma conscience.—Ni cette ville coupable, ni cette assemblée plus coupable encore, ne meritoient que je me justifie; mais j'ai à cœur que vous, et les personnes qui pensent comme vous, ne me condamnent pas.—Ma santé, je vous jure, me rendoit mes fonctions impossibles; mais même en les mettant de côté il a été-au-dessus de mes forces de supporter plus longtems l'horreur que me causoit ce sang,—ces têtes—cette reine *presque égorgée*, ce roi,—amené *esclave*,—entrant à Paris, au milieu de ses assassins, et précédé des têtes de ses malheureux, gardes—ces perfides janissaires, ces assassins, ces femmes cannibales, ce cri de TOUS LES EVÊQUES À LA LANTERNE, dans le moment ou le roi entre, sa capi

Although this work of our new light and knowledge did not go to the length that in all probability it was intended it should be carried; yet I must think that such treatment of any human creatures must be shocking to any but those who are made for accomplishing revolutions. But I cannot stop here. Influenced by the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a single ray of this new-sprung modern light, I confess to you, sir, that the exalted rank of the persons suffering, and particularly the sex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities of the descendant of so many kings and emperors, with the tender age of royal infants, insensible only through

tale avec deux évêques de son conseil dans sa voiture—un *coup de fusil*, que j'ai vu tirer dans un *des carosses de la reine*—M. Bailly appellant cela *un beau jour*—l'assemblée ayant déclaré froidement le matin, qu'il n'étoit pas de sa dignité d'aller toute entiere environner le roi—M. Mirabeau disant impunément dans cette assemblée que le vaisseau de l'état, loin d'être arrêté dans sa course, s'élanceroit avec plus de rapidité que jamais vers sa régénération—M. Barnave, riant avec lui, quand des flots de sang couloient autour de nous—le vertueux Mounier* échappant par miracle à vingt assassins, qui avoient voulu faire de sa tête un trophée de plus: Voilà ce qui me fit jurer de ne plus mettre le pied *dans cette caverne d'Antropophages* [the national assembly] où je n'avois plus de force d'élever la voix, ou depuis six semaines je l'avois élevée en vain.

"Moi, Mounier, et tous les honnêtes gens, ont pensé que le dernier effort à faire pour le bien étoit d'en sortir. Aucune idée de crainte ne s'est approchée de moi. Je rougirois de m'en défendre. J'avois encore reçû sur la route de la part de ce peuple, moins coupable que ceux qui l'ont enivré de fureur, des acclamations, et des applaudissements, dont d'autres auroient été flattés, et qui m'ont fait frémir. C'est à l'indignation, c'est à l'horreur, c'est aux convulsions physiques, que le seul aspect du sang me fait éprouver que j'ai cédé. On brave un seule mort; on la brave plusieurs fois, quand elle peut être utile. Mais aucune puissance sous le ciel, mais aucune opinion publique ou privée n'ont le droit de me condamner à souffrir inutilement mille supplices par minute, et à perir de désespoir, de rage, au milieu des *triomphes* du crime que je n'ai pu arrêter. Ils me proscriront, ils confisqueront mes biens. Je labourerai la terre, et je ne les verrai plus. Voilà ma justification. Vous pourrez la lire, la montrer, la laisser copier; tant pis pour ceux qui ne la comprendront pas; ce ne sera alors moi qui auroit eu tort de la leur donner."

This military man had not so good nerves as the peaceable gentleman of the Old Jewry.—See Mons. Mounier's narrative of these transactions; a man also of honor and virtue, and talents, and therefore a fugitive.

* N. B. Mr. Mounier was then speaker of the national assembly. He has since been obliged to live in exile, though one of the firmest assertors of liberty.

infancy and innocence of the cruel outrages to which their parents were exposed, instead of being a subject of exultation, adds not a little to my sensibility on that most melancholy occasion.

I hear that the august person, who was the principal object of our preacher's triumph, though he supported himself, felt much on that shameful occasion. As a man, it became him to feel for his wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his person, that were massacred in cold blood about him; as a prince it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be more grieved for them, than solicitous for himself. It derogates little from his fortitude, while it adds infinitely to the honor of his humanity. I am very sorry to say it, very sorry indeed, that such personages are in a situation in which it is not becoming in us to praise the virtues of the great.

I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady, the other object of the triumph, has borne that day (one is interested that beings made for suffering should suffer well) and that she bears all the succeeding days, that she bears the imprisonment of her husband, and her own captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the insulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a serene patience, in a manner suited to her rank and race, and becoming the offspring of a sovereign distinguished for her piety and her courage; that, like her, she has lofty sentiments; that she feels with the dignity of a Roman matron; that in the last extremity she will save herself from the last disgrace; and that, if she must fall, she will fall by no ignoble hand.

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning-star; full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that ele-

vation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream, that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone: that of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sove-

reigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a domination vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal; and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide, and parricide, and sacrilege, are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father, are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solemn wisdom, as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern, which each individual may find in them, from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may

use the expression, in persons; so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states:—*Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto.* There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

But power, of some kind or other, will survive the shock in which manners and opinions perish; and it will find other and worse means for its support. The usurpation which, in order to subvert ancient institutions, has destroyed ancient principles, will hold power by arts similar to those by which it has acquired it. When the old feudal and chivalrous spirit of *fealty*, which, by freeing kings from fear, freed both kings and subjects from the precautions of tyranny, shall be extinct in the minds of men, plots and assassinations will be anticipated by preventive murder and preventive confiscation, and that long roll of grim and bloody maxims, which form the political code of all power, not standing on its own honor, and the honor of those who are to obey it. Kings will be tyrants from policy when subjects are rebels from principle.

When ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated. From that moment we have no compass to govern us; nor can we know distinctly to what port we steer. Europe, undoubtedly, taken in a mass, was in a flourishing condition the day on which your revolution was completed. How much of that prosperous state was owing to the spirit of our old manners and opinions is not easy to say; but as such causes cannot be indifferent in their operation, we must presume, that, on the whole, their operation was beneficial.

We are but too apt to consider things in the state in which we find them, without sufficiently adverting to the causes by

which they have been produced, and possibly may be upheld. Nothing is more certain, than that our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization, have, in this European world of ours, depended for ages upon two principles; and were indeed the result of both combined; I mean the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion. The nobility and the clergy, the one by profession, the other by patronage, kept learning in existence, even in the midst of arms and confusions, and whilst governments were rather in their causes than formed. Learning paid back what it received to nobility and to priesthood; and paid it with usury, by enlarging their ideas, and by furnishing their minds. Happy if they had all continued to know their indissoluble union, and their proper place! Happy if learning, not debauched by ambition, had been satisfied to continue the instructer, and not aspired to be the master! Along with its natural protectors and guardians, learning will be cast into the mire, and trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude.*

If, as I suspect, modern letters owe more than they are always willing to own to ancient manners, so do other interests which we value full as much as they are worth. Even commerce, and trade, and manufacture, the gods of our economical politicians, are themselves perhaps but creatures; are themselves but effects, which, at first causes, we choose to worship. They certainly grew under the same shade in which learning flourished. They too may decay with their natural protecting principles. With you, for the present at least, they all threaten to disappear together. Where trade and manufactures are wanting to a people, and the spirit of nobility and religion remains, sentiment supplies, and not always ill supplies their place; but if commerce and the arts should be lost in an experiment to try how well a

* See the fate of Bailly and Condorcet, supposed to be here particularly alluded to. Compare the circumstances of the trial, and execution of the former with this prediction.

state may stand without these old fundamental principles, what sort of a thing must be a nation of gross, stupid, ferocious, and at the same time, poor and sordid barbarians, destitute of religion, honor, or manly pride, possessing nothing at present, and hoping for nothing hereafter?

I wish you may not be going fast, and by the shortest cut, to that horrible and disgustful situation. Already there appears a poverty of conception, a coarseness and vulgarity in all the proceedings of the assembly and of all their instructers. Their liberty is not liberal. Their science is presumptuous ignorance. Their humanity is savage and brutal.

It is not clear, whether in England we learned those grand and decorous principles, and manners, of which considerable traces yet remain, from you, or whether you took them from us. But to you, I think, we trace them best. You seem to me to be—*gentis incunabula nostræ.* France has always more or less influenced manners in England; and when your fountain is choked up and polluted, the stream will not run long, or not run clear with us, or perhaps with any nation. This gives all Europe, in my opinion, but too close and connected a concern in what is done in France. Excuse me, therefore, if I have dwelt too long on the atrocious spectacle of the sixth of October, 1789, or have given too much scope to the reflections which have arisen in my mind on occasion of the most important of all revolutions, which may be dated from that day, I mean a revolution in sentiments, manners, and moral opinions. As things now stand, with every thing respectable destroyed without us, and an attempt to destroy within us every principle of respect, one is almost forced to apologize for harboring the common feelings of men.

Why do I feel so differently from the reverend Dr. Price, and those of his lay flock, who will choose to adopt the sentiments of his discourse? For this plain reason—because it is *natural* I should; because we are so made as to be affected at such spectacles with melancholy sentiments upon the unstable condition of mortal prosperity, and the tremendous uncertainty of human greatness; because in those natural feel-

ings we learn great lessons; because in events like these our passions instruct our reason; because when kings are hurled from their thrones by the Supreme Director of this great drama, and become the objects of insult to the base, and of pity to the good, we behold such disasters in the moral, as we should behold a miracle in the physical order of things. We are alarmed into reflection; our minds (as it has long since been observed) are purified by terror and pity; our weak unthinking pride is humbled, under the dispensations of a mysterious wisdom. Some tears might be drawn from me, if such a spectacle were exhibited on the stage. I should be truly ashamed of finding in myself that superficial, theatric sense of painted distress, whilst I could exult over it in real life. With such a perverted mind, I could never venture to shew my face at a tragedy. People would think the tears that Garrick formerly, or that Siddons not long since, have extorted from me, were the tears of hypocrisy; I should know them to be the tears of folly.

Indeed the theatre is a better school of moral sentiments than churches, where the feelings of humanity are thus outraged. Poets who have to deal with an audience not yet graduated in the school of the rights of men, and who must apply themselves to the moral constitution of the heart, would not dare to produce such a triumph as a matter of exultation. There, where men follow their natural impulses, they would not bear the odious maxims of a Machiavelian policy, whether applied to the attainment of monarchical or democratic tyranny. They would reject them on the modern, as they once did on the ancient stage, where they could not bear even the hypothetical proposition of such wickedness in the mouth of a personated tyrant, though suitable to the character he sustained. No theatric audience in Athens would bear what has been borne, in the midst of the real tragedy of this triumphal day; a principal actor weighing, as it were in scales hung in a shop of horrors,—so much actual crime against so much contingent advantage,—and after putting in and out weights, declaring that the balance was on the side of the advantages.

They would not bear to see the crimes of new democracy posted as in a ledger against the crimes of old despotism, and the book-keepers of politics finding democracy still in debt, but by no means unable or unwilling to pay the balance. In the theatre, the first intuitive glance, without any elaborate process of reasoning, would shew, that this method of political computation would justify every extent of crime. They would see, that on these principles, even where the very worst acts were not perpetrated, it was owing rather to the fortune of the conspirators than to their parsimony in the expenditure of treachery and blood. They would soon see, that criminal means once tolerated are soon preferred. They present a shorter cut to the object than through the highway of the moral virtues. Justifying perfidy and murder for public benefit, public benefit would soon become the pretext, and perfidy and murder the end; until rapacity, malice, revenge, and fear more dreadful than revenge, could satiate their insatiable appetites. Such must be the consequences of losing in the splendor of these triumphs of the rights of men, all natural sense of wrong and right.

But the reverend pastor exults in this "leading in triumph," because truly Louis the Sixteenth was an "arbitrary monarch;" that is, in other words, neither more nor less, than because he was Louis the Sixteenth, and because he had the misfortune to be born king of France, with the prerogatives of which, a long line of ancestors, and a long acquiescence of the people, without any act of his, had put him in possession. A misfortune it has indeed turned out to him, that he was born king of France. But misfortune is not crime, nor is indiscretion always the greatest guilt. I shall never think that a prince, the acts of whose whole reign were a series of concessions to his subjects, who was willing to relax his authority, to remit his prerogatives, to call his people to a share of freedom, not known, perhaps not desired by their ancestors; such a prince, though he should be subject to the common frailties attached to men and to princes, though he should have once thought it necessary to provide force against the desperate

designs manifestly carrying on against his person, and the remnants of his authority; though all this should be taken into consideration, I shall be led with great difficulty to think he deserves the cruel and insulting triumph of Paris, and of Dr. Price. I tremble for the cause of liberty, from such an example to kings. I tremble for the cause of humanity, in the unpunished outrages of the most wicked of mankind. But there are some people of that low and degenerate fashion of mind, that they look up with a sort of complacent awe and admiration to kings, who know to keep firm in their seat, to hold a strict hand over their subjects, to assert their prerogative, and by the awakened vigilance of a severe despotism, to guard against the very first approaches of freedom. Against such as these they never elevate their voice. Deserters from principle, listed with fortune, they never see any good in suffering virtue, nor any crime in prosperous usurpation.

If it could have been made clear to me, that the king and queen of France (those I mean who were such before the triumph) were inexorable and cruel tyrants, that they had formed a deliberate scheme for massacring the national assembly (I think I have seen something like the latter insinuated in certain publications,) I should think their captivity just. If this be true, much more ought to have been done, but done, in my opinion, in another manner. The punishment of real tyrants is a noble and awful act of justice; and it has with truth been said to be consolatory to the human mind. But if I were to punish a wicked king, I should regard the dignity in avenging the crime. Justice is grave and decorous, and in its punishments rather seems to submit to a necessity, than to make a choice. Had Nero, or Agrippina, or Louis the Eleventh, or Charles the Ninth, been the subject; if Charles the Twelfth of Sweden after the murder of Patkul, or his predecessor Christina, after the murder of Monaldeschi, had fallen into your hands, sir, or into mine, I am sure our conduct would have been different.

If the French king, or king of the French, (or by whatever name he is known in the new vocabulary of your con-

stitution) has in his own person, and that of his queen, really deserved these unavowed but unavenged murderous attempts, and those frequent indignities more cruel than murder, such a person would ill deserve even that subordinate executory trust, which I understand is to be placed in him; nor is he fit to be called chief in a nation which he has outraged and oppressed. A worse choice for such an office in a new commonwealth, than that of a deposed tyrant, could not possibly be made. But to degrade and insult a man as the worst of criminals, and afterwards to trust him in your highest concerns, as a faithful, honest, and zealous servant, is not consistent in reasoning, nor prudent in policy, nor safe in practice. Those who could make such an appointment must be guilty of a more flagrant breach of trust than any they have yet committed against the people. As this is the only crime in which your leading politicians could have acted inconsistently, I conclude that there is no sort of ground for these horrid insinuations. I think no better of all the other calumnies.

In England, we give no credit to them. We are generous enemies: we are faithful allies. We spurn from us with disgust and indignation the slanders of those who bring us their anecdotes with the attestation of the flower-de-luce on their shoulder. We have Lord George Gordon fast in Newgate; and neither his being a public proselyte to Judaism, nor his having, in his zeal against catholic priests and all sorts of ecclesiastics, raised a mob (excuse the term, it is still in use here,) which pulled down all our prisons, have preserved to him a liberty, of which he did not render himself worthy by a virtuous use of it. We have rebuilt Newgate, and tenanted the mansion. We have prisons almost as strong as the Bastile, for those who dare to libel the queens of France. In this spiritual retreat, let the noble libeler remain. Let him there meditate on his Thalmud, until he learns a conduct more becoming his birth and parts, and not so disgraceful to the ancient religion to which he has become a proselyte; or until some persons from your side of the water,

to please your new Hebrew brethren, shall ransom him. He may then be enabled to purchase, with the old hoards of the synagogue, and a very small poundage, on the long compound interest of the thirty pieces of silver (Dr. Price has shewn us what miracles compound interest will perform in 1790 years) the lands which are lately discovered to have been usurped by the Gallican church. Send us your popish archbishop of Paris, and we will send you our protestant Rabbin. We shall treat the person you send us in exchange like a gentleman and an honest man, as he is; but pray let him bring with him the fund of his hospitality, bounty, and charity; and, depend upon it, we shall never confiscate a shilling of that honorable and pious fund, nor think of enriching the treasury with the spoils of the poor-box.

To tell you the truth, my dear sir, I think the honor of our nation to be somewhat concerned in the disclaimer of the proceedings of this society of the Old Jewry and the London Tavern. I have no man's proxy. I speak only for myself; when I disclaim, as I do with all possible earnestness, all communion with the actors in that triumph, or with the admirers of it. When I assert any thing else, as concerning the people of England, I speak from observation, not from authority; but I speak from the experience I have had in a pretty extensive and mixed communication with the inhabitants of this kingdom, of all descriptions and ranks, and after a course of attentive observation, begun in early life, and continued for near forty years. I have often been astonished, considering that we are divided from you but by a slender dike of about twenty-four miles, and that the mutual intercourse between the two countries has lately been very great, to find how little you seem to know of us. I suspect that this is owing to your forming a judgment of this nation from certain publications, which do, very erroneously, if they do at all, represent the opinions and dispositions generally prevalent in England. The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise, and

puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a general mark of acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that of course, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little shriveled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.

I almost venture to affirm, that not one in a hundred amongst us participates in the "triumph" of the revolution society. If the king and queen of France, and their children, were to fall into our hands by the chance of war, in the most acrimonious of all hostilities, (I deprecate such an event, I deprecate such hostility,) they would be treated with another sort of triumphal entry into London. We formerly have had a king of France in that situation; you have read how he was treated by the victor in the field; and in what manner he was afterwards received in England. Four hundred years have gone over us; but I believe we are not materially changed since that period. Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries; and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould

upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely emboweled of our natural entrails; we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings, still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility.* Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty; and by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for, and justly deserving of slavery, through the whole course of our lives.

You see, sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess, that we are generally men of untaught feelings; that instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted, and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them.

* The English are, I conceive, misrepresented in a letter published in one of the papers by a gentleman thought to be a dissenting minister.—When writing to Dr. Price of the spirit which prevails at Paris, he says, "The spirit of the people in this place has abolished all the proud *distinctions* which the *king* and *nobles* had usurped in their minds; whether they talk of *the king, the noble, or the priest*, their whole language is that of the most *enlightened and liberal amongst the English*." If this gentleman means to confine the terms *enlightened and liberal* to one set of men in England, it may be true. It is not generally so.

We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices, employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, skeptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit; and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.

Your literary men, and your politicians, and so do the whole clan of the enlightened among us, essentially differ in these points. They have no respect for the wisdom of others; but they pay it off by a very full measure of confidence in their own. With them it is a sufficient motive to destroy an old scheme of things, because it is an old one. As to the new, they are in no sort of fear with regard to the duration of a building run up in haste; because duration is no object to those who think little or nothing has been done before their time, and who place all their hopes in discovery. They conceive, very systematically, that all things which give perpetuity are mischievous, and therefore they are at inexpiable war with all establishments. They think that government may vary like modes of dress, and with as little ill-effect: that there needs no principle of attachment, except a sense of present conveniency, to any constitution of the state. They always speak as if they were of opinion that there is a singular species of compact between them and their magistrates,

which binds the magistrate, but which has nothing reciprocal in it, but that the majesty of the people has a right to dissolve it without any reason, but its will. Their attachment to their country itself is only so far as it agrees with some of their fleeting projects; it begins and ends with that scheme of polity which falls in with their momentary opinion.

These doctrines, or rather sentiments, seem prevalent with your new statesmen. But they are wholly different from those on which we have always acted in this country.

I hear it is sometimes given out in France, that what is doing among you is after the example of England. I beg leave to affirm, that scarcely any thing done with you has originated from the practice or the prevalent opinions of this people, either in the act or in the spirit of the proceeding. Let me add, that we are as unwilling to learn these lessons from France, as we are sure that we never taught them to that nation. The cabals here who take a sort of share in your transactions, as yet consist of but a handful of people. If unfortunately by their intrigues, their sermons, their publications, and by a confidence derived from an expected union with the counsels and forces of the French nation, they should draw considerable numbers into their faction, and in consequence should seriously attempt any thing here in imitation of what has been done with you, the event, I dare venture to prophesy, will be, that, with some trouble to their country, they will soon accomplish their own destruction. This people refused to change their law in remote ages, from respect to the infallibility of popes; and they will not now alter it from a pious implicit faith in the dogmatism of philosophers; though the former was armed with the anathema and crusade, and though the latter should act with the libel and the lamp iron.

Formerly your affairs were your own concern only. We felt for them as men; but we kept aloof from them, because we were not citizens of France. But when we see the model held up to ourselves, we must feel as Englishmen, and feeling, we must provide as Englishmen. Your affairs, in spite

of us, are made a part of our interest; so far at least as to keep at a distance your panacea, or your plague. If it be a panacea, we do not want it. We know the consequences of unnecessary physic. If it be a plague; it is such a plague, that the precautions, of the most severe quarantine ought to be established against it.

I hear on all hands that a cabal, calling itself philosophic, receives the glory of many of the late proceedings; and that their opinions and systems are the true actuating spirit of the whole of them. I have heard of no party in England, literary or political, at any time, known by such a description. It is not with you composed of those men, is it, whom the vulgar, in their blunt homely style, commonly call atheists and infidels? If it be, I admit that we too have had writers of that description, who made some noise in their day. At present they repose in lasting oblivion. Who, born within the last forty years, has read one word of Collins, and Toland, and Tindal, and Chubb, and Morgan, and that whole race who called themselves Freethinkers? Who now reads Bolingbroke? Who ever read him through? Ask the booksellers of London what is become of all these lights of the world. In as few years their few successors will go to the family vault of "all the Capulets." But whatever they were, or are, with us, they were and are wholly unconnected individuals. With us they kept the common nature of their kind, and were not gregarious. They never acted in corps, or were known as a faction in the state, nor presumed to influence in that name or character, or for the purposes of such a faction, any of our public concerns. Whether they ought so to exist, and so be permitted to act, is another question. As such cabals have not existed in England, so neither has the spirit of them had any influence in establishing the original frame of our constitution, or in any one of the several reparations and improvements it has undergone. The whole has been done under the auspices, and is confirmed by the sanctions of religion and piety. The whole has emanated from the simplicity of our national character,

and from a sort of native plainness and directness of understanding, which for a long time characterized those men who have successively obtained authority among us. This disposition still remains, at least in the great body of the people.

We know, and what is better, we feel inwardly, that religion is the basis of civil society, and the source of all good and of all comfort.* In England we are so convinced of this, that there is no rust of superstition, with which the accumulated absurdity of the human mind might have crusted it over in the course of ages, that ninety-nine in a hundred of the people of England would not prefer to impiety. We shall never be such fools as to call in an enemy to the substance of any system to remove its corruptions, to supply its defects, or to perfect its construction. If our religious tenets should ever want a further elucidation, we shall not call on atheism to explain them. We shall not light up our temple from that unhallowed fire. It will be illuminated with other lights. It will be perfumed with other incense, than the infectious stuff which is imported by the smugglers of adulterated metaphysics. If our ecclesiastical establishment should want a revision, it is not avarice or rapacity, public or private, that we shall employ for the audit, or receipt, or application of its consecrated revenue. Violently condemning neither the Greek nor the Armenian, nor, since heats are subsided, the Roman system of religion, we prefer the Protestant; not because we think it has less of the Christian religion in it, but because, in our judgment, it has more. We are protestants, not from indifference but from zeal.

We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal; that atheism is against, not

* Sit igitur hoc ab initio persuasum civibus, dominos esse omnium rerum ac moderatores, deos; eaque, quæ gerantur, eorum geri vi ditione, ac; numine eosdemque optime de genere hominum mereri; et qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, qua mente qua pietate cólat religiones intueri: piorum et impiorum habere rationem His enim rebus imbutæ mentes haud sane abhorrebunt ab utili et a vera sententia. Cic. de Legibus, l. 2.

must enjoy some determinate portion of power. To them therefore a religion connected with the state, and with their duty towards it, becomes even more necessary than in such societies, where the people by the terms of their subjection are confined to private sentiments, and the management of their own family concerns. All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust; and that they are to account for their conduct in that trust to the one great master, author and founder of society.

This principle ought even to be more strongly impressed upon the minds of those who compose the collective sovereignty than upon those of single princes. Without instruments, these princes can do nothing. Whoever uses instruments, in finding helps, finds also impediments. Their power is therefore by no means complete; nor are they safe in extreme abuse. Such persons, however elevated by flattery, arrogance, and self-opinion, must be sensible that, whether covered or not by positive law, in some way or other they are accountable even here for the abuse of their trust. If they are not cut off by a rebellion of their people, they may be strangled by the very janissaries kept for their security against all other rebellion. Thus we have seen the king of France sold by his soldiers for an increase of pay. But where popular authority is absolute and unrestrained, the people have an infinitely greater, because a far better founded confidence in their own power. They are themselves, in a great measure, their own instruments. They are nearer to their objects. Besides, they are less under responsibility to one of the greatest controlling powers on earth, the sense of fame and estimation. The share of infamy that is likely to fall to the lot of each individual in public acts, is small indeed; the operation of opinion being in the inverse ratio to the number of those who abuse power. Their own approbation of their own acts has to them the appearance of a public judgment in their favor. A perfect democracy is therefore the most shameless thing in the world. As it is the most shameless, it is also

the most fearless. No man apprehends in his person he can be made subject to punishment. Certainly the people at large never ought: for as all punishments are for example towards the conservation of the people at large, the people at large can never become the subject of punishment by any human hand.* It is therefore of infinite importance that they should not be suffered to imagine that their will, any more than that of kings, is the standard of right and wrong. They ought to be persuaded that they are full as little entitled, and far less qualified, with safety to themselves, to use any arbitrary power whatsoever; that therefore they are not, under a false shew of liberty, but, in truth, to exercise an unnatural inverted domination, tyrannically to exact, from those who officiate in the state, not an entire devotion to their interest, which is their right, but an abject submission to their occasional will; extinguishing thereby, in all those who serve them, all moral principle, all sense of dignity, all use of judgment, and all consistency of character, whilst by the very same process they give themselves up a proper, a suitable, but a most contemptible prey to the servile ambition of popular sycophants or courtly flatterers.

When the people have emptied themselves of all the lust of selfish will, which without religion it is utterly impossible they ever should, when they are conscious that they exercise, and exercise perhaps in a higher link of the order of delegation, the power, which to be legitimate must be according to that eternal immutable law, in which will and reason are the same, they will be more careful how they place power in base and incapable hands. In their nomination to office, they will not appoint to the exercise of authority, as to a pitiful job, but as to a holy function; not according to their sordid selfish interest, not to their wanton caprice, nor to their arbitrary will; but they will confer that power (which any man may well tremble to give or to receive) on those only, in whom they may discern that predominant proportion of active virtue and

* Quicquid multis peccatur inultum.

wisdom, taken together and fitted to the charge, such, as in the great and inevitable mixed mass of human imperfections and infirmities, is to be found.

When they are habitually convinced that no evil can be acceptable, either in the act or the permission, to him whose essence is good, they will be better able to extirpate out of the minds of all magistrates, civil, ecclesiastical, or military, any thing that bears the least resemblance to a proud and lawless domination.

But one of the first and most leading principles on which the commonwealth and the laws are consecrated, is lest the temporary possessors and life-renters in it, unmindful of what they have received from their ancestors, or of what is due to their posterity, should act as if they were the entire masters; that they should not think it amongst their rights to cut off the entail, or commit waste on the inheritance, by destroying at their pleasure the whole original fabric of their society; hazarding to leave to those who come after them, a ruin instead of an habitation—and teaching these successors as little to respect their contrivances, as they had themselves respected the institutions of their forefathers. By this unprincipled facility of changing the state as often, and as much, and in as many ways as there are floating fancies or fashions, the whole chain and continuity of the commonwealth would be broken. No one generation could link with the other. Men would become little better than the flies of a summer.

And first of all, the science of jurisprudence, the pride of the human intellect, which, with all its defects, redundancies, and errors, is the collected reason of ages, combining the principles of original justice with the infinite variety of human concerns, as a heap of old exploded errors, would be no longer studied. Personal self-sufficiency and arrogance (the certain attendants upon all those who have never experienced a wisdom greater than their own) would usurp the tribunal. Of course, no certain laws, establishing invariable grounds of hope and fear, would keep the actions of men in a certain

course, or direct them to a certain end. Nothing stable in the modes of holding property, or exercising function, could form a solid ground on which any parent could speculate in the education of his offspring, or in a choice for their future establishment in the world. No principles would be early worked into the habits. As soon as the most able instructer had completed his laborious course of institution, instead of sending forth his pupil, accomplished in a virtuous discipline, fitted to procure him attention and respect, in his place in society, he would find every thing altered; and that he had turned out a poor creature to the contempt and derision of the world, ignorant of the true grounds of estimation. Who would insure a tender and delicate sense of honor to beat almost with the first pulses of the heart, when no man could know what would be the test of honor in a nation, continually varying the standard of its coin? No part of life would retain its acquisitions. Barbarism with regard to science and literature, unskilfulness with regard to arts and manufactures, would infallibly succeed to the want of a steady education and settled principle; and thus the commonwealth itself would, in a few generations, crumble away, be disconnected into the dust and powder of individuality, and at length dispersed to all the winds of heaven.

To avoid, therefore, the evils of inconstancy and versatility, ten thousand times worse than those of obstinacy and the blindest prejudice, we have consecrated the state, that no man should approach to look into its defects or corruptions but with due caution; that he should never dream of beginning its reformation by its subversion; that he should approach to the faults of the state as to the wounds of a father, with pious awe and trembling solicitude. By this wise prejudice we are taught to look with horror on those children of their country who are prompt rashly to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds, and wild incantations, they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life.

Society is indeed a contract. Subordinate contracts for objects of mere occasional interest may be dissolved at pleasure—but the state ought not to be considered as nothing better than a partnership agreement in a trade of pepper and coffee, calico or tobacco, or some other such low concern, to be taken up for a little temporary interest, and to be dissolved by the fancy of the parties. It is to be looked on with other reverence; because it is not a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in all art; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born. Each contract of each particular state is but a clause in the great primeval contract of eternal society, linking the lower with the higher natures, connecting the visible and invisible world, according to a fixed compact sanctioned by the inviolable oath which holds all physical and all moral natures, each in their appointed place. This law is not subject to the will of those, who by an obligation above them, and infinitely superior, are bound to submit their will to that law. The municipal corporations of that universal kingdom are not morally at liberty at their pleasure, and on their speculations of a contingent improvement, wholly to separate and tear asunder the bands of their subordinate community, and to dissolve it into an unsocial, uncivil, unconnected chaos of elementary principles. It is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen, but chooses, a necessity paramount to deliberation, that admits no discussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy. This necessity is no exception to the rule; because this necessity itself is a part too of that moral and physical disposition of things to which man must be obedient by consent of force; but if that which is only submission to necessity should be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is disobeyed, and the

rebellious are outlawed, cast forth, and exiled, from this world of reason, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow.

These, my dear sir, are, were, and I think long will be, the sentiments of not the least learned and reflecting part of this kingdom. They who are included in this description, form their opinions on such grounds as such persons ought to form them. The less inquiring receive them from an authority, which those whom Providence dooms to live on trust need not be ashamed to rely on. These two sorts of men move in the same direction, though in a different place. They both move with the order of the universe. They all know or feel this great ancient truth: "Quod illi principi et præpotenti Deo qui omnem hunc mundum regit, nihil eorum quæ quidem fiant in terris acceptius quam concilia et cœtus hominum jure sociati quæ civitates appellantur." They take this tenet of the head and heart, not from the great name which it immediately bears, nor from the greater from whence it is derived; but from that which alone can give true weight and sanction to any learned opinion, the common nature and common relation of men. Persuaded that all things ought to be done with reference, and referring all to the point of reference to which all should be directed, they think themselves bound, not only as individuals in the sanctuary of the heart, or as congregated in that personal capacity, to renew the memory of their high origin and cast; but also in their corporate character to perform their national homage to the institutor, and author and protector of civil society; without which civil society man could not by any possibility arrive at the perfection of which his nature is capable, nor even make a remote and faint approach to it. They conceive that He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue, willed also the necessary means of its perfection. He willed therefore the state—He willed its connection with the source and original archetype of all perfection. They who are convinced of this his will, which is the law of laws, and the sovereign of sove-

reigns, cannot think it reprehensible that this our corporate fealty and homage, that this our recognition of a signiory paramount, I had almost said this oblation of the state itself, as a worthy offering on the high altar of universal praise, should be performed as all public solemn acts are performed, in buildings, in music, in decoration, in speech, in the dignity of persons, according to the customs of mankind, taught by their nature! that is, with modest splendor, with unassuming state, with mild majesty and sober pomp. For those purposes they think some part of the wealth of the country is as usefully employed as it can be, in fomenting the luxury of individuals. It is the public ornament. It is the public consolation. It nourishes the public hope. The poorest man finds his own importance and dignity in it, whilst the wealth and pride of individuals at every moment makes the man of humble rank and fortune sensible of his inferiority, and degrades and vilifies his condition. It is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue, that this portion of the general wealth of his country is employed and sanctified.

I assure you I do not aim at singularity. I give you opinions which have been accepted amongst us, from very early times to this moment, with a continued and general approbation, and which indeed are so worked into my mind, that I am unable to distinguish what I have learned from others from the results of my own meditation.

It is on some such principles that the majority of the people of England, far from thinking a religious national establishment unlawful, hardly think it lawful to be without one. In France you are wholly mistaken if you do not believe us above all other things attached to it, and beyond all other nations; and when this people has acted unwisely and unjustifiably in its favor (as in some instances they have done most certainly) in their very errors you will at least discover their zeal.

This principle runs through the whole system of their polity. They do not consider their church establishment as convenient, but as essential to their state; not as a thing heterogeneous and separable; something added for accommodation; what they may either keep or lay aside, according to their temporary ideas of convenience. They consider it as the foundation of their whole constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church and state are ideas inseparable in their minds, and scarcely is the one ever mentioned without mentioning the other.

Our education is so formed as to confirm and fix this impression. Our education is in a manner wholly in the hands of ecclesiastics, and in all stages from infancy to manhood. Even when our youth, leaving schools and universities, enter that most important period of life which begins to link experience and study together, and when with that view they visit other countries, instead of old domestics, whom we have seen as governors to principal men from other parts, three fourths of those who go abroad with our young nobility and gentlemen are ecclesiastics; not as austere masters, nor as mere followers; but as friends and companions of a graver character, and not seldom persons as well born as themselves. With them, as relations, they most commonly keep up a close connection through life. By this connection we conceive that we attach our gentlemen to the church; and we liberalize the church by an intercourse with the leading characters of the country.

So tenacious are we of the old ecclesiastical modes and fashions of institution, that very little alteration has been made in them since the fourteenth or fifteenth century; adhering in this particular, as in all things else, to our old settled maxim, never entirely nor at once to depart from antiquity. We found these old institutions, on the whole, favorable to morality and discipline; and we thought they were susceptible of amendment, without altering the ground. We thought that they were capable of receiving and meliorating, and above

all of preserving, the accessions of science and literature, as the order of Providence should successively produce them. And after all, with this gothic and monkish education (for such it is in the groundwork) we may put in our claim to as ample and as early a share in all the improvements in science, in arts, and in literature, which have illuminated and adorned the modern world, as any other nation in Europe; we think one main cause of this improvement was our not despising the patrimony of knowledge which was left us by our forefathers.

It is from our attachment to a church establishment that the English nation did not think it wise to entrust that great fundamental interest of the whole to what they trust no part of their civil or military public service, that is, to the unsteady and precarious contribution of individuals. They go further. They certainly never have suffered and never will suffer the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps to be extinguished by fiscal difficulties; which difficulties may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and are in fact often brought on by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. The people of England think that they have constitutional motives, as well as religious, against any project of turning their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners of state. They tremble for their liberty, from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown; they tremble for the public tranquillity from the disorders of a factious clergy, if it were made to depend upon any other than the crown. They therefore made their church, like their king and their nobility, independent.

From the united considerations of religion and constitutional policy, from their opinion of a duty to make a sure provision for the consolation of the feeble, and the instruction of the ignorant, they have incorporated and identified the estate of the church with the mass of *private property*, of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but the guardian only and the regulator. They have ordained that the provision of this establishment might be as stable as the

earth on which it stands, and should not fluctuate with the Euripus of funds and actions.

The men of England, the men, I mean, of light and leading in England, whose wisdom (if they have any) is open and direct, would be ashamed, as of a silly deceitful trick, to profess any religion in name, which by their proceedings they appear to contemn. If by their conduct (the only language that rarely lies) they seemed to regard the great ruling principle of the moral and the natural world, as a mere invention to keep the vulgar in obedience, they apprehend that by such a conduct they would defeat the politic purpose they have in view. They would find it difficult to make others believe in a system to which they manifestly gave no credit themselves. The christian statesmen of this land would indeed first provide for the *multitude;* because it is the *multitude;* and is, therefore, as such, the first object in the ecclesiastical institution, and in all institutions. They have been taught, that the circumstance of the gospel's being preached to the poor, was one of the great tests of its true mission. They think, therefore, that those do not believe it, who do not take care it should be preached to the poor. But as they know that charity is not confined to any one description, but ought to apply itself to all men who have wants, they are not deprived of a due and anxious sensation of pity to the distresses of the miserable great. They are not repelled through a fastidious delicacy, at the stench of their arrogance and presumption, from a medicinal attention to their mental blotches and running sores. They are sensible, that religious instruction is of more consequence to them than to any others; from the greatness of the temptation to which they are exposed; from the important consequences that attend their faults; from the contagion of their ill example; from the necessity of bowing down the stubborn neck of their pride and ambition to the yoke of moderation and virtue; from a consideration of the fat stupidity and gross ignorance concerning what imports men most to know, which prevails at courts, and at the head of armies, and in senates, as much as at the loom and in the field.

The English people are satisfied, that to the great the consolations of religion are as necessary as its instructions. They too are among the unhappy. They feel personal pain and domestic sorrow. In these they have no privilege, but are subject to pay their full contingent to the contributions levied on mortality. They want this sovereign balm under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void that reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear; something to relieve in the killing languor and over-labored lassitude of those who have nothing to do; something to excite an appetite to existence in the pallid satiety which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and therefore fruition defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight; and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment.

The people of England know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have with the wealthy and powerful of long standing, and how much less with the newly fortunate, if they appear in a manner no way assorted to those with whom they must associate, and over whom they must even exercise, in some cases, something like an authority. What must they think of that body of teachers, if they see it in no part above the establishment of their domestic servants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be some difference. Strong instances of self-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants has obtained great freedom and firmness, and even dignity. But as the mass of any description of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that disrespect which attends upon all lay poverty, will not depart from the ecclesiastical. Our provident constitution has therefore taken care that those who

are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms; nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds. For these reasons, whilst we provide first for the poor, and with a parental solicitude, we have not relegated religion (like something we were ashamed to shew) to obscure municipalities or rustic villages. No! we will have her to exalt her mitred front in courts and parliaments. We will have her mixed throughout the whole mass of life, and blended with all the classes of society. The people of England will shew to the haughty potentates of the world, and to their talking sophisters, that a free, a generous, an informed nation, honors the high magistrates of its church; that it will not suffer the insolence of wealth and titles, or any other species of proud pretension, to look down with scorn upon what they look up to with reverence; nor presume to trample on that acquired personal nobility, which they intend always to be, and which often is, the fruit, not the reward, (for what can be the reward?) of learning, piety, and virtue. They can see, without pain or grudging, an archbishop precede a duke. They can see a bishop of Durham, or a bishop of Winchester, in possession of ten thousand pounds a year; and cannot conceive why it is in worse hands than estates to the like amount in the hands of this earl, or that squire; although it may be true, that so many dogs and horses are not kept by the former, and fed with the victuals which ought to nourish the children of the people. It is true, the whole church revenue is not always employed, and to every shilling, in charity; nor perhaps ought it; but something is generally so employed. It is better to cherish virtue and humanity, by leaving much to free will, even with some loss to the object, than to attempt to make men mere machines and instruments of a political benevolence. The world on the whole will gain by a liberty, without which virtue cannot exist.

When once the commonwealth has established the estates of the church as property, it can, consistently, hear nothing

of the more or the less. Too much and too little are treason against property. What evil can arise from the quantity in any hand, whilst the supreme authority has the full, sovereign, superintendence over this, as over any property, to prevent every species of abuse; and, whenever it notably deviates, to give to it a direction agreeable to the purposes of its institution.

In England most of us conceive that it is envy and malignity towards those who are often the beginners of their own fortune, and not a love of the self-denial and mortification of the ancient church, that makes some look askance at the distinctions, and honors, and revenues, which, taken from no person, are set apart for virtue. The ears of the people of England are distinguishing. They hear these men speak broad. Their tongue betrays them. Their language is in the *patois* of fraud; in the cant and gibberish of hypocrisy. The people of England must think so, when these praters affect to carry back the clergy to that primitive evangelic poverty, which, in the spirit, ought always to exist in them, (and in us too, however we may like it,) but in the thing must be varied, when the relation of that body to the state is altered; when manners, when modes of life, when indeed the whole order of human affairs has undergone a total revolution. We shall believe those reformers then to be honest enthusiasts, not as now we think them, cheats and deceivers, when we see them throwing their own goods into common, and submitting their own persons to the austere discipline of the early church.

With these ideas rooted in their minds, the commons of Great Britain, in the national emergencies, will never seek their resource from the confiscation of the estates of the church and poor. Sacrilege and proscription are not among the ways and means of our committee of supply. The Jews in Change-alley have not yet dared to hint their hopes of a mortgage on the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury. I am not afraid that I shall be disavowed, when I assure you, that there is not *one* public man in this kingdom, whom you

would wish to quote; no not one of any party or description, who does not reprobate the dishonest, perfidious, and cruel confiscation which the national assembly has been compelled to make, of that property which it was their first duty to protect.

It is with the exultation of a little national pride I tell you, that those amongst us who have wished to pledge the societies of Paris in the cup of their abominations, have been disappointed. The robbery of your church has proved a security to the possessions of ours. It has roused the people. They see with horror and alarm that enormous and shameless act of proscription. It has opened, and will more and more open, their eyes upon the selfish enlargement of mind, and the narrow liberality of sentiment of insidious men, which, commencing in close hypocrisy and fraud, have ended in open violence and rapine. At home we behold similar beginnings. We are on our guard against similar conclusions.

I hope we shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed upon us by the law of social union, as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen. Who but a tyrant (a name expressive of every thing which can vitiate and degrade human nature) could think of seizing on the property of men, unaccused, unheard, untried, by whole descriptions, by hundreds and thousands together? Who that had not lost every trace of humanity, could think of casting down men of exalted rank and sacred function, some of them of an age to call at once for reverence and compassion, of casting them down from the highest situation in the commonwealth, wherein they were maintained by their own landed property, to a state of indigence, depression, and contempt?

The confiscators truly have made some allowance to their victims from the scraps and fragments of their own tables, from which they have been so harshly driven, and which have been so bountifully spread for a feast to the harpies of usury. But to drive men from independence to live on alms, is itself great cruelty. That which might be a tolerable con-

dition to men in one state of life, and not habituated to other things, may, when all these circumstances are altered, be a dreadful revolution; and one to which a virtuous mind would feel pain in condemning any guilt, except that which would demand the life of the offender. But to many minds this punishment of *degradation* and *infamy* is worse than death. Undoubtedly it is an infinite aggravation of this cruel suffering, that the persons who were taught a double prejudice in favor of religion, by education, and by the place they held in the administration of its functions, are to receive the remnants of the property as alms from the profane and impious hands of those who had plundered them of all the rest; to receive (if they are at all to receive) not from the charitable contributions of the faithful, but from the insolent tenderness of known and avowed atheism, the maintenance of religion, measured out to them on the standard of the contempt in which it is held; and for the purpose of rendering those who receive the allowance vile, and of no estimation in the eyes of mankind.

But this act of seizure of property, it seems, is a judgment in law, and not a confiscation. They have, it seems, found out in the academies of the *Palais Royale*, and the *Jacobins*, that certain men had no right to the possessions which they held under law, usage, the decisions of courts, and the accumulated prescription of a thousand years. They say that ecclesiastics are fictitious persons, creatures of the state, whom at pleasure they may destroy, and of course limit and modify in every particular; that the goods they possess are not properly theirs, but belong to the state which created the fiction; and we are therefore not to trouble ourselves with what they may suffer in their natural feelings and natural persons, on account of what is done towards them in this their constructive character. Of what import is it, under what names you injure men, and deprive them of the just emoluments of a profession, in which they were not only permitted but encouraged by the state to engage; and upon the supposed certainty of which emoluments they had formed the plan of their lives,

contracted debts, and led multitudes to an entire dependence upon them?

You do not imagine, sir, that I am going to compliment this miserable distinction of persons with any long discussion. The arguments of tyranny are as contemptible as its force is dreadful. Had not your confiscators, by their early crimes, obtained a power which secures indemnity to all the crimes of which they have since been guilty, or that they can commit, it is not the syllogism of the logician, but the lash of the executioner that would have refuted a sophistry which becomes an accomplice of theft and murder. The sophistic tyrants of Paris are loud in their declamations against the departed regal tyrants, who in former ages have vexed the world. They are thus bold, because they are safe from the dungeons and iron cages of their old masters. Shall we be more tender of the tyrants of our own time, when we see them acting worse tragedies under our eyes? shall we not use the same liberty that they do, when we can use it with the same safety? when to speak honest truth only requires a contempt of the opinion of those whose actions we abhor?

This outrage on all the rights of property was at first covered with what, on the system of their conduct, was the most astonishing of all pretexts—a regard to national faith. The enemies to property at first pretended a most tender, delicate, and scrupulous anxiety for keeping the king's engagements with the public creditor. These professors of the rights of men are so busy in teaching others, that they have not leisure to learn any thing themselves: otherwise they would have known, that it is to the property of the citizen, and not to the demands of the creditor of the state, that the first and original faith of civil society is pledged. The claim of the citizen is prior in time, paramount in title, superior in equity. The fortunes of individuals, whether possessed by acquisition, or by descent, or in virtue of a participation in the goods of some community, were no part of the creditor's security, expressed or implied. They never so much as entered into his head when he made his bargain. He well knew that the public, whether

represented by a monarch or by a senate, can pledge nothing but the public estate; and it can have no public estate, except in what it derives from a just and proportioned imposition upon the citizens at large. This was engaged, and nothing else could be engaged to the public creditor. No man can mortgage his injustice as a pawn for his fidelity.

It is impossible to avoid some observation on the contradictions caused by the extreme rigor and the extreme laxity of this new public faith, which influenced in this transaction, and which influenced not according to the nature of the obligation, but to the description of the persons to whom it was engaged. No acts of the old government of the kings of France are held valid in the national assembly, except its pecuniary engagements; acts of all others of the most ambiguous legality. The rest of the acts of that royal government are considered in so odious a light, that to have a claim under its authority is looked on as a sort of crime. A pension, given as a reward for service to the state, is surely as good a ground of property as any security for money advanced to the state. It is a better; for money is paid, and well paid, to obtain that service. We have however seen multitudes of people under this description in France, who never had been deprived of their allowances by the most arbitrary ministers, in the most arbitrary times, by this assembly of the rights of men, robbed without mercy. They were told, in answer to their claim to the bread earned with their blood, that their services had not been rendered to the country that now exists.

This laxity of public faith is not confined to those unfortunate persons. The assembly, with perfect consistency it must be owned, is engaged in a respectable deliberation how far it is bound by the treaties made with other nations under the former government, and their committee is to report which of them they ought to ratify, and which not. By this means they have put the external fidelity of this virgin state on a par with its internal.

It is not easy to conceive upon what rational principle the royal government should not, of the two, rather have possessed

the power of rewarding service, and making treaties, in virtue of its prerogative, than that of pledging to creditors the revenue of the state, actual and possible. The treasure of the nation, of all things, has been the least allowed to the prerogative of the king of France, or to the prerogative of any king in Europe. To mortgage the public revenue implies the sovereign dominion, in the fullest sense, over the public purse. It goes far beyond the trust even of a temporary and occasional taxation. The acts however of that dangerous power (the distinctive mark of a boundless despotism) have been alone held sacred. Whence arose this preference given by a democratic assembly to a body of property deriving its title from the most critical and obnoxious of all the exertions of monarchical authority? Reason can furnish nothing to reconcile inconsistency; nor can partial favor be accounted for upon equitable principles. But the contradiction and partiality which admit no justification, are not the less without an adequate cause; and that cause I do not think it difficult to discover.

By the vast debt of France a great monied interest has insensibly grown up, and with it a great power. By the ancient usages which prevailed in that kingdom, the general circulation of property, and in particular the mutual convertibility of land into money, and of money into land, had always been a matter of difficulty. Family settlements, rather more general and more strict than they are in England, the *jus retractus*, the great mass of landed property held by the crown, and by a maxim of the French law held unalienably, the vast estates of the ecclesiastic corporations,—all these had kept the landed and monied interests more separated in France, less miscible, and the owners of the two distinct species of property not so well disposed to each other as they are in this country.

The monied property was long looked on with rather an evil eye by the people. They saw it connected with their distresses, and aggravating them. It was no less envied by the old landed interests, partly for the same reasons that rendered it obnoxious to the people, but much more so as it

eclipsed, by the splendor of an ostentatious luxury, the unendowed pedigrees and naked titles of several among the nobility. Even when the nobility, which represented the more permanent landed interest, united themselves by marriage (which sometimes was the case) with the other description, the wealth which saved the family from ruin, was supposed to contaminate and degrade it. Thus the enmities and heart-burnings of these parties were increased even by the usual means by which discord is made to cease, and quarrels are turned into friendship. In the mean time, the pride of the wealthy men, not noble or newly noble, increased with its cause. They felt with resentment an inferiority, the grounds of which they did not acknowledge. There was no measure to which they were not willing to lend themselves, in order to be revenged of the outrages of this rival pride, and to exalt their wealth to what they considered as its natural rank and estimation. They struck at the nobility through the crown and the church. They attacked them particularly on the side on which they thought them the most vulnerable, that is, the possessions of the church, which, through the patronage of the crown, generally devolved upon the nobility. The bishoprics, and the great commendatory abbeys, were, with few exceptions, held by that order.

In this state of real, though not always perceived warfare between the noble ancient landed interest, and the new monied interest, the greatest because the most applicable strength was in the hands of the latter. The monied interest is in its nature more ready for any adventure; and its possessors more disposed to new enterprises of any kind. Being of a recent acquisition, it falls in more naturally with any novelties. It is therefore the kind of wealth which will be resorted to by all who wish for change.

Along with the monied interest, a new description of men had grown up, with whom that interest soon formed a close and marked union; I mean the political men of letters. Men of letters, fond of distinguishing themselves, are rarely averse to innovation. Since the decline of the life and greatness of

Louis the Fourteenth, they were not so much cultivated either by him, or by the regent, or the successors to the crown; nor were they engaged to the court by favors and emoluments so systematically as during the splendid period of that ostentatious and not impolitic reign. What they lost in the old court protection, they endeavored to make up by joining in a sort of incorporation of their own; to which the two academies of France, and afterwards the vast undertaking of the Encyclopædia, carried on by a society of these gentlemen, did not a little contribute.

The literary cabal had some years ago formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. They were possessed with a spirit of proselytism in the most fanatical degree; and from thence, by an easy progress, with the spirit of persecution according to their means.* What was not to be done towards their great end by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer process through the medium of opinion. To command that opinion, the first step is to establish a dominion over those who direct it. They contrived to possess themselves, with great method and perseverance, of all the avenues to literary fame. Many of them indeed stood high in the ranks of literature and science. The world had done them justice; and in favor of general talents forgave the evil tendency of their peculiar principles. This was true liberality; which they returned by endeavoring to confine the reputation of sense, learning, and taste to themselves or their followers. I will venture to say that this narrow, exclusive spirit has not been less prejudicial to literature and to taste, than to morals and true philosophy. These atheistical fathers have a bigotry of their own; and they have learnt to talk against monks with the spirit of a monk. But in some things they are men of the world. The

* This (down to the end of the first sentence in the next paragraph) and some other parts here and there, were inserted, on his reading the manuscript, by my lost son.

resources of intrigue are called in to supply the defects of argument and wit. To this system of literary monopoly was joined an unremitting industry to blacken and discredit in every way, and by every means, all those who did not hold to their faction. To those who have observed the spirit of their conduct, it has long been clear that nothing was wanted but the power of carrying the intolerance of the tongue and of the pen into a persecution which would strike at property, liberty, and life.

The desultory and faint persecution carried on against them, more from compliance with form and decency than with serious resentment, neither weakened their strength, nor relaxed their efforts. The issue of the whole was, that what with opposition, and what with success, a violent and malignant zeal, of a kind hitherto unknown in the world, had taken an entire possession of their minds, and rendered their whole conversation, which otherwise would have been pleasing and instructive, perfectly disgusting. A spirit of cabal, intrigue, and proselytism, pervaded all their thoughts, words, and actions. And, as controversial zeal soon turns its thoughts on force, they began to insinuate themselves into a correspondence with foreign princes; in hopes, through their authority, which at first they flattered, they might bring about the changes they had in view. To them it was indifferent whether these changes were to be accomplished by the thunderbolt of despotism, or by the earthquake of popular commotion. The correspondence between this cabal and the late king of Prussia, will throw no small light upon the spirit of all their proceedings.* For the same purpose for which they intrigued with princes, they cultivated, in a distinguished manner, the monied interest of France; and partly through the means furnished by those whose peculiar offices gave them the most extensive and certain means of communication, they carefully occupied all the avenues to opinion.

* I do not choose to shock the feeling of the moral reader with any quotation of their vulgar, base, and profane language.

Writers, especially when they act in a body, and with one direction, have great influence on the public mind; the alliance therefore of these writers with the monied interest,* had no small effect in removing the popular odium and envy which attended that species of wealth. These writers, like the propagators of all novelties, pretended to a great zeal for the poor, and the lower orders, whilst in their satires they rendered hateful, by every exaggeration, the faults of courts, of nobility, and of priesthood. They became a sort of demagogues. They served as a link to unite, in favor of one object, obnoxious wealth to restless and desperate poverty.

As these two kinds of men appear principal leaders in all the late transactions, their junction and politics will serve to account, not upon any principles of law or of policy, but as a *cause* for the general fury with which all the landed property of ecclesiastical corporations has been attacked; and the great care which, contrary to their pretended principles, has been taken, of a monied interest originating from the authority of the crown. All the envy against wealth and power, was artificially directed against other descriptions of riches. On what other principle than that which I have stated can we account for an appearance so extraordinary and unnatural as that of the ecclesiastical possessions, which had stood so many successions of ages and shocks of civil violences, and were guarded at once by justice, and by prejudice, being applied to the payment of debts, comparatively recent, invidious, and contracted by a decried and subverted government?

Was the public estate a sufficient stake for the public debts? Assume that it was not, and that a loss *must* be incurred somewhere—when the only estate lawfully possessed, and which the contracting parties had in contemplation at the time in which their bargain was made, happens to fail, who, according to the principles of natural and legal equity, ought to be the sufferer? Certainly it ought to be either the party who trusted, or the party who persuaded him to trust; or

* Their connection with Turgot and almost all the people of the finance.

both; and not third parties who had no concern with the transaction. Upon any insolvency they ought to suffer who were weak enough to lend upon bad security, or they who fraudulently held out a security that was not valid. Laws are acquainted with no other rules of decision. But by the new institute of the rights of men, the only persons, who in equity ought to suffer, are the only persons who are to be saved harmless: those are to answer the debt who neither were lenders nor borrowers, mortgagers nor mortgagees.

What had the clergy to do with these transactions? What had they to do with any public engagement further than the extent of their own debt? To that, to be sure, their estates were bound to the last acre. Nothing can lead more to the true spirit of the assembly, which sits for public confiscation, with its new equity, and its new morality, than an attention to their proceeding with regard to this debt of the clergy. The body of confiscators, true to that monied interest for which they were false to every other, have found the clergy competent to incur a legal debt. Of course they declared them legally entitled to the property which their power of incurring the debt and mortgaging the estate implied; recognising the rights of those persecuted citizens, in the very act in which they were thus grossly violated.

If, as I said, any persons, are to make good deficiencies to the public creditor, besides the public at large, they must be those who managed the agreement. Why therefore are not the estates of all the comptrollers general confiscated?* Why not those of the long succession of ministers, financiers, and bankers who have been enriched whilst the nation was impoverished by their dealings and their counsels? Why is not the estate of Mr. Laborde declared forfeited rather than of the archbishop of Paris, who has had nothing to do in the creation or in the jobbing of the public funds? Or, if you must confiscate old landed estates in favor of the money-jobbers, why is the penalty confined to one descrip-

* All have been confiscated in their turn.

tion? I do not know whether the expenses of the duke de Choiseul have left any thing of the infinite sums which he had derived from the bounty of his master, during the transactions of a reign which contributed largely, by every species of prodigality in war and peace, to the present debt of France. If any such remains, why is not this confiscated? I remember to have been in Paris during the time of the old government. I was there just after the duke d'Aiguillon had been snatched (as it was generally thought) from the block by the hand of a protecting despotism. He was a minister, and had some concern in the affairs of that prodigal period. Why do I not see his estate delivered up to the municipalities in which it is situated? The noble family of Noailles have long been servants (meritorious servants I admit) to the crown of France, and have had of course some share in its bounties. Why do I hear nothing of the application of their estates to the public debt? Why is the estate of the duke de Rochefoucault more sacred than that of the cardinal de Rochefoucault? The former is, I doubt not, a worthy person; and (if it were not a sort of profaneness to talk of the use, as affecting the title to property,) he makes a good use of his revenues; but it is no disrespect to him to say, what authentic information well warrants me in saying, that the use made of a property equally valid, by his brother* the cardinal archbishop of Rouen, was far more laudable and far more public-spirited. Can one hear of the proscription of such persons, and the confiscation of their effects, without indignation and horror? He is not a man who does not feel such emotions on such occasions. He does not deserve the name of a free man who will not express them.

Few barbarous conquerors have ever made so terrible a revolution in property. None of the heads of the Roman factions, when they established "*crudelem illam hastam*" in all their auctions of rapine, have ever set up to sale the goods of the conquered citizen to such an enormous amount. It

* Not his brother, nor any near relation: but this mistake does not affect the argument.

must be allowed in favor of those tyrants of antiquity, that what was done by them could hardly be said to be done in cold blood. Their passions were inflamed, their tempers soured, their understandings confused, with the spirit of revenge, with the innumerable reciprocated and recent inflictions and retaliations of blood and rapine. They were driven beyond all bounds of moderation by the apprehension of the return of power with the return of property, to the families of those they had injured beyond all hope of forgiveness.

These Roman confiscators, who were yet only in the elements of tyranny, and were not instructed in the rights of men to exercise all sorts of cruelties on each other without provocation, thought it necessary to spread a sort of color over their injustice. They considered the vanquished party as composed of traitors who had borne arms, or otherwise had acted with hostility against the commonwealth. They regarded them as persons who had forfeited their property by their crimes. With you, in your improved state of the human mind, there was no such formality. You seized upon five millions sterling of annual rent, and turned forty or fifty thousand human creatures out of their houses, because "such was your pleasure." The tyrant, Harry the Eighth of England, as he was not better enlightened than the Roman Mariuses and Syllas, and had not studied in your new schools, did not know what an effectual instrument of despotism was to be found in that grand magazine of offensive weapons, the rights of men. When he resolved to rob the abbeys, as the club of the Jacobins have robbed all the ecclesiastics, he began by setting on foot a commission to examine into the crimes and abuses which prevailed in those communities. As it might be expected, his commission reported truths, exaggerations, and falsehoods. But truly or falsely it reported abuses and offences. However, as abuses might be corrected, as every crime of persons does not infer a forfeiture with regard to communities, and as property, in that dark age, was not discovered to be a creature of prejudice, all those abuses (and there were enough of them) were hardly thought suffi-

cient ground for such a confiscation as it was for his purposes to make. He therefore procured the formal surrender of these estates. All these operose proceedings were adopted by one of the most decided tyrants in the rolls of history, as necessary preliminaries, before he could venture, by bribing the members of his two servile houses with a share of the spoil, and holding out to them an eternal immunity from taxation, to demand a confirmation of his iniquitous proceedings by an act of parliament. Had fate reserved him to our times, four technical terms would have done his business, and saved him all this trouble; he needed nothing more than one short form of incantation—"*Philosophy, Light, Liberality, the Rights of Men.*"

I can say nothing in praise of those acts of tyranny, which no voice has hitherto ever commended under any of their false colors; yet in these false colors an homage was paid by despotism to justice. The power which was above all fear and all remorse was not set above all shame. Whilst shame keeps its watch, virtue is not wholly extinguished in the heart; nor will moderation be utterly exiled from the minds of tyrants.

I believe every honest man sympathizes in his reflections with our political poet on that occasion, and will pray to avert the omen whenever these acts of rapacious despotism present themselves to his view or his imagination:

——"May no such storm
Fall on our times, where ruin must reform.
Tell me (my muse) what monstrous, dire offence,
What crimes could any Christian king incense
To such a rage? Was't luxury, or lust?
Was *he* so temperate, so chaste, so just?
Were these their crimes? they were his own much more;
But wealth is crime enough to him that's poor."*

* The rest of the passage is this ——

"Who having spent the treasures of his crown,
Condemns their luxury to feed his own.
And yet this act, to varnish o'er the shame

This same wealth, which is at all times treason and *lese nation* to indigent and rapacious despotism, under all modes of polity, was your temptation to violate property, law, and religion, united in one object. But was the state of France so wretched and undone, that no other resource but rapine remained to preserve its existence? On this point I wish to receive some information. When the states met, was the condition of the finances of France such, that, after economizing on principles of justice and mercy through all departments, no fair repartition of burthens upon all the orders

Of sacrilege, must bear devotion's name.
No crime so bold, but would be understood
A real, or at least a seeming good;
Who fears not to do ill, yet fears the name,
And, free from conscience, is a slave to fame.
Thus he the church at once protects, and spoils:
But princes' swords are sharper than their styles.
And thus to th' ages past he makes amends,
Their charity destroys, their faith defends.
Then did religion in a lazy cell,
In empty aëry contemplation dwell;
And like the block, unmoved lay: but ours,
As much too active, like the stork devours.
Is there no temp'rate region can be known,
Betwixt their frigid, and our torrid zone?
Could we not wake from that lethargic dream,
But to be restless in a worse extreme?
And for that lethargy was there no cure,
But to be cast into a calenture?
Can knowledge have no bound, but must advance
So far, to make us wish for ignorance?
And rather in the dark to grope our way,
Than, led by a false guide, to err, by day?
Who sees these dismal heaps, but would demand,
What barbarous invader sack'd the land?
But when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
This desolation, but a Christian king;
When nothing, but the name of zeal, appears
'Twixt our best actions, and the worst of theirs,
What does he think our sacrilege would spare,
When such th' effects of our devotion are?"

COOPER'S HILL, by Sir JOHN DENHAM.

could possibly restore them? If such an equal imposition would have been sufficient, you well know it might easily have been made. Mr. Necker, in the budget which he laid before the orders assembled at Versailles, made a detailed exposition of the state of the French nation.*

If we give credit to him, it was not necessary to have recourse to any new impositions whatsoever, to put the receipts of France on a balance with its expenses. He stated the permanent charges of all descriptions, including the interest of a new loan of four hundred millions at 531,444,000 livres; the fixed revenue at 475,294,000, making the deficiency 56,150,000, or short of 2,200,000 sterling. But to balance it, he brought forward savings and improvements of revenue (considered as entirely certain) to rather more than the amount of that deficiency; and he concludes with these emphatical words (p. 39): "Quel pays, Messieurs, que celui, où, *sans impôts* et avec de simples objets *inapperçus*, on peut faire disparoître un deficit qui a fait tant de bruit en Europe." As to the reimbursement, the sinking of debt, and the other great objects of public credit and political arrangement indicated in Monsieur Necker's speech, no doubt could be entertained, but that a very moderate and proportioned assessment on the citizens without distinction would have provided for all of them to the fullest extent of their demand.

If this representation of Mons. Necker was false, then the assembly are in the highest degree culpable for having forced the king to accept as his minister, and since the king's deposition, for having employed as *their* minister, a man who had been capable of abusing so notoriously the confidence of his master and their own; in a matter too of the highest moment, and directly appertaining to his particular office. But if the representation was exact (as having always, along with you, conceived a high degree of respect for Mr. Necker, I make no doubt it was,) then what can

* Rapport de Mons. le Directeur-Général des Finances, fait par ordre du Roi à Versailles. Mai 5, 1789.

be said in favor of those, who, instead of moderate, reasonable, and general contribution, have in cold blood, and impelled by no necessity, had recourse to a partial and cruel confiscation?

Was that contribution refused on a pretext of privilege, either on the part of the clergy, or on that of the nobility? No, certainly. As to the clergy, they even ran before the wishes of the third order. Previous to the meeting of the states, they had in all their instructions expressly directed their deputies to renounce every immunity, which put them upon a footing distinct from the condition of their fellow subjects. In this renunciation the clergy were even more explicit than the nobility.

But let us suppose that the deficiency had remained at the 56 millions, (or £2,200,000 sterling) as at first stated by Mr. Necker. Let us allow that all the resources he opposed to that deficiency were impudent and groundless fictions; and that the assembly (or their lords of articles* at the Jacobins) were from thence justified in laying the whole burden of that deficiency on the clergy,—yet allowing all this, a necessity of £2,200,000 sterling will not support a confiscation to the amount of five millions. The imposition of £2,200,000 on the clergy, as partial, would have been oppressive and unjust, but it would not have been altogether ruinous to those on whom it was imposed; and therefore it would not have answered the real purpose of the managers.

Perhaps persons, unacquainted with the state of France, on hearing the clergy and the noblesse were privileged in point of taxation, may be led to imagine, that previous to the revolution these bodies had contributed nothing to the state. This is a great mistake. They certainly did not contribute equally with each other, nor either of them equally with the commons. They both however contributed largely. Neither nobility nor clergy enjoyed any exemption from the

* In the constitution of Scotland, during the Stuart reigns, a committee sat for preparing bills; and none could pass, but those previously approved by them. This committee was called lords of articles.

excise on consumable commodities, from duties of custom, or from any of the other numerous *indirect* impositions, which in France, as well as here, make so very large a proportion of all payments to the public. The noblesse paid the capitation. They paid also a land tax, called the twentieth penny, to the height sometimes of three, sometimes of four shillings in the pound; both of them *direct* impositions of no light nature, and no trivial produce. The clergy of the provinces annexed by conquest to France, (which in extent make about an eighth part of the whole, but in wealth a much larger proportion,) paid likewise to the capitation and the twentieth penny, at the rate paid by the nobility. The clergy in the old provinces did not pay the capitation; but they had redeemed themselves at the expense of about 24 millions, or a little more than a million sterling. They were exempted from the twentieths; but then they made free gifts; they contracted debts for the state; and they were subject to some other charges, the whole computed at about a thirteenth part of their clear income. They ought to have paid annually about forty thousand pounds more, to put them on a par with the contribution of the nobility.

When the terrors of this tremendous proscription hung over the clergy, they made an offer of a contribution, through the archbishop of Aix, which, for its extravagance, ought not to have been accepted. But it was evidently and obviously more advantageous to the public creditor, than any thing which could rationally be promised by the confiscation. Why was it not accepted? The reason is plain—there was no desire that the church should be brought to serve the state. The service of the state was made a pretext to destroy the church. In their way to the destruction of the church they would not scruple to destroy their country: and they have destroyed it. One great end in the project would have been defeated, if the plan of extortion had been adopted in lieu of the scheme of confiscation. The new landed interest connected with the new republic, and connected with it for its very being, could not have been created.

This was among the reasons why that extravagant ransom was not accepted.

The madness of the project of confiscation, on the plan that was first pretended, soon became apparent. To bring this unwieldy mass of landed property, enlarged by the confiscation of all the vast landed domain of the crown, at once into market, was obviously to defeat the profits proposed by the confiscation, by depreciating the value of those lands, and indeed of all the landed estates throughout France. Such a sudden diversion of all its circulating money from trade to land, must be an additional mischief. What step was taken? Did the assembly, on becoming sensible of the inevitable ill effects of their projected sale, revert to the offers of the clergy? No distress could oblige them to travel in a course which was disgraced by any appearance of justice. Giving over all hopes from a general immediate sale, another project seems to have succeeded. They proposed to take stock in exchange for the church lands. In that project great difficulties arose in equalizing the objects to be exchanged. Other obstacles also presented themselves, which threw them back again upon some project of sale. The municipalities had taken an alarm. They would not hear of transferring the whole plunder of the kingdom to the stockholders in Paris. Many of those municipalities had been (upon system) reduced to the most deplorable indigence. Money was nowhere to be seen. They were therefore led to the point that was so ardently desired. They panted for a currency of any kind which might revive their perishing industry. The municipalities were then to be admitted to a share in the spoil, which evidently rendered the first scheme (if ever it had been seriously entertained) altogether impracticable. Public exigences pressed upon all sides. The minister of finance reiterated his call for supply with a most urgent, anxious, and boding voice. Thus pressed on all sides, instead of the first plan of converting their bankers into bishops and abbots, instead of paying the old debt, they contracted a new debt, at three per cent. creating a

new paper currency, founded on an eventual sale of the church lands. They issued this paper currency to satisfy in the first instance chiefly the demands made upon them by the *bank of discount*, the great machine, or paper-mill, of their fictitious wealth.

The spoil of the church was now become the only resource of all their operations in finance; the vital principle of all their politics; the sole security for the existence of their power. It was necessary by all, even the most violent means, to put every individual on the same bottom, and to bind the nation in one guilty interest to uphold this act, and the authority of those by whom it was done. In order to force the most reluctant into a participation of their pillage, they rendered their paper circulation compulsory in all payments. Those who consider the general tendency of their schemes to this one object as a centre, and a centre from which afterwards all their measures radiate, will not think that I dwell too long upon this part of the proceedings of the national assembly.

To cut off all appearance of connection between the crown and public justice, and to bring the whole under implicit obedience to the dictators in Paris, the old independent judicature of the parliaments, with all its merits, and all its faults, was wholly abolished. Whilst the parliaments existed, it was evident that the people might some time or other come to resort to them, and rally under the standard of their ancient laws. It became however a matter of consideration that the magistrates and officers, in the courts now abolished, *had purchased their places* at a very high rate, for which, as well as for the duty they performed, they received but a very low return of interest. Simple confiscation is a boon only for the clergy;—to the lawyers some appearances of equity are to be observed; and they are to receive compensation to an immense amount. Their compensation becomes part of the national debt, for the liquidation of which there is the one exhaustless fund. The lawyers are to obtain their compensation in this new church paper, which is to march with

the new principles of judicature and legislature. The dismissed magistrates are to take their share of martyrdom with the ecclesiastics, or to receive their own property from such a fund, and in such a manner, as all those, who have been seasoned with the ancient principles of jurisprudence, and had been the sole guardians of property, must look upon with horror. Even the clergy are to receive their miserable allowance out of the depreciated paper which is stamped with the indelible character of sacrilege, and with the symbols of their own ruin, or they must starve. So violent an outrage upon credit, property, and liberty, as this compulsory paper currency, has seldom been exhibited by the alliance of bankruptcy and tyranny, at any time, or in any nation.

In the course of all these operations, at length comes out the grand *arcanum*;—that in reality, and in a fair sense, the lands of the church (so far as any thing certain can be gathered from their proceedings) are not to be sold at all. By the late resolutions of the national assembly, they are indeed to be delivered to the highest bidder. But it is to be observed, that *a certain portion only of the purchase money is to be laid down.* A period of twelve years is to be given for the payment of the rest. The philosophic purchasers are therefore, on payment of a sort of fine, to be put instantly into possession of the estate. It becomes in some respects a sort of gift to them; to be held on the feudal tenure of zeal to the new establishment. This project is evidently to let in a body of purchasers without money. The consequence will be, that these purchasers, or rather guarantees, will pay, not only from the rents as they accrue, which might as well be received by the state, but from the spoil of the materials of buildings, from waste in woods, and from whatever money, by hands habituated to the gripings of usury, they can wring from the miserable peasant. He is to be delivered over to the mercenary and arbitrary discretion of men, who will be stimulated to every species of extortion by the growing demands on the growing profits of an estate held under the precarious settlement of a new political system.

When all the frauds, impostures, violences, rapines, burnings, murders, confiscations, compulsory paper currencies, and every description of tyranny and cruelty employed to bring about and to uphold this revolution, have their natural effect, that is, to shock the moral sentiments of all virtuous and sober minds, the abettors of this philosophic system immediately strain their throats in a declamation against the old monarchical government of France. When they have rendered that deposed power sufficiently black, they then proceed in argument, as if all those who disapprove of their new abuses, must of course be partisans of the old; that those who reprobate their crude and violent schemes of liberty ought to be treated as advocates for servitude. I admit that their necessities do compel them to this base and contemptible fraud. Nothing can reconcile men to their proceedings and projects but the supposition that there is no third option between them and some tyranny as odious as can be furnished by the records of history, or by the invention of poets. This prattling of theirs hardly deserves the name of sophistry. It is nothing but plain impudence. Have these gentlemen never heard, in the whole circle of the worlds of theory and practice, of any thing between the despotism of the monarch and the despotism of the multitude? Have they never heard of a monarchy directed by laws, controlled and balanced by the great hereditary wealth and hereditary dignity of a nation; and both again controlled by a judicious check from the reason and feeling of the people at large acting by a suitable and permanent organ? Is it then impossible that a man may be found who, without criminal ill intention, or pitiable absurdity, shall prefer such a mixed and tempered government to either of the extremes; and who may repute that nation to be destitute of all wisdom and of all virtue, which, having in its choice to obtain such a government with ease, *or rather to confirm it when actually possessed*, thought proper to commit a thousand crimes, and to subject their country to a thousand evils, in order to avoid it? Is it then a truth so universally acknowledged, that a pure democracy is

the only tolerable form into which human society can be thrown, that a man is not permitted to hesitate about its merits, without the suspicion of being a friend to tyranny, that is, of being a foe to mankind?

I do not know under what description to class the present ruling authority in France. It affects to be a pure democracy, though I think it in a direct train of becoming shortly a mischievous and ignoble oligarchy. But for the present I admit it to be a contrivance of the nature and effect of what it pretends to. I reprobate no form of government merely upon abstract principles. There may be situations in which the purely democratic form will become necessary. There may be some (very few, and very particularly circumstanced,) where it would be clearly desirable. This I do not take to be the case of France, or of any other great country. Until now, we have seen no examples of considerable democracies. The ancients were better acquainted with them. Not being wholly unread in the authors, who had seen the most of those constitutions, and who best understood them, I cannot help concurring with their opinion, that an absolute democracy, no more than absolute monarchy, is to be reckoned among the legitimate forms of government. They think it rather the corruption and degeneracy, than the sound constitution of a republic. If I recollect rightly, Aristotle observes, that a democracy has many striking points of resemblance with a tyranny.* Of this I am cer-

* When I wrote this I quoted from memory, after many years had elapsed from my reading the passage. A learned friend has found it, and it is as follows:

Τὸ ἦθος τὸ αὐτὸ, καὶ ἄμφω δεσποτικὰ τῶν βελτιόνων, καὶ τὰ ψηφίσματα, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖ τὰ ἐπιτάγματα· καὶ ὁ δημαγωγὸς καὶ ὁ κόλαξ, οἱ αὐτοὶ καὶ ἀνάλογοι· καὶ μάλιστα ἑκάτεροι παρ' ἑκατέροις ἰσχύουσιν, οἱ μὲν κόλακες παρὰ τυράννοις, οἱ δὲ δημαγωγοὶ παρὰ τοῖς δήμοις τοῖς τοιούτοις—.

"The ethical character is the same; both exercise despotism over the better class of citizens; and decrees are in the one, what ordinances and arrêts are in the other: the demagogue too, and the court favorite, are not unfrequently the same identical men, and always bear a close analogy; and these have the principal power, each in their respective forms of government, favorites with the absolute monarch, and demagogues with a people such as I have described."—Arist. Politic. lib. iv. cap. 4.

tain, that in a democracy, the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority, whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of polity, as they often must; and that oppression of the minority will extend to far greater numbers, and will be carried on with much greater fury, than can almost ever be apprehended from the dominion of a single sceptre. In such a popular persecution, individual sufferers are in a much more deplorable condition than in any other. Under a cruel prince they have the balmy compassion of mankind to assuage the smart of their wounds; they have the plaudits of the people to animate their generous constancy under their sufferings: but those who are subjected to wrong under multitudes, are deprived of all external consolation. They seem deserted by mankind; overpowered by a conspiracy of their whole species.

But admitting democracy not to have that inevitable tendency to party tyranny, which I suppose it to have, and admitting it to possess as much good in it when unmixed, as I am sure it possesses when compounded with other forms; does monarchy, on its part, contain nothing at all to recommend it? I do not often quote Bolingbroke, nor have his works in general left any permanent impression on my mind. He is a presumptuous and a superficial writer. But he has one observation, which, in my opinion, is not without depth and solidity. He says, that he prefers a monarchy to other governments; because you can better ingraft any description of republic on a monarchy than any thing of monarchy upon the republican forms. I think him perfectly in the right. The fact is so historically; and it agrees well with the speculation.

I know how easy a topic it is to dwell on the faults of departed greatness. By a revolution in the state, the fawning sycophant of yesterday is converted into the austere critic of the present hour. But steady independent minds, when they have an object of so serious a concern to mankind as government, under their contemplation, will disdain to assume the

part of satirists and declaimers. They will judge of human institutions as they do of human characters. They will sort out the good from the evil, which is mixed in mortal institutions as it is in mortal men.

Your government in France, though usually, and I think justly, reputed the best of the unqualified or ill-qualified monarchies, was still full of abuses. These abuses accumulated in a length of time, as they must accumulate in every monarchy not under the constant inspection of a popular representative. I am no stranger to the faults and defects of the subverted government of France; and I think I am not inclined by nature or policy to make a panegyric upon any thing which is a just and natural object of censure. But the question is not now of the vices of that monarchy, but of its existence. Is it then true, that the French government was such as to be incapable or undeserving of reform; so that it was of absolute necessity the whole fabric should be at once pulled down, and the area cleared for the erection of a theoretic experimental edifice in its place? All France was of a different opinion in the beginning of the year 1789. The instructions to the representatives to the states-general, from every district in that kingdom, were filled with projects for the reformation of that government, without the remotest suggestion of a design to destroy it. Had such a design been then even insinuated, I believe there would have been but one voice, and that voice for rejecting it with scorn and horror. Men have been sometimes led by degrees, sometimes hurried, into things of which, if they could have seen the whole together, they never would have permitted the most remote approach. When those instructions were given, there was no question but that abuses existed, and that they demanded a reform; nor is there now. In the interval between the instructions and the revolution, things changed their shape; and in consequence of that change, the true question at present is, Whether those who would have reformed, or those who have destroyed, are in the right?

To hear some men speak of the late monarchy of France,

you would imagine that they were talking of Persia bleeding under the ferocious sword of Tahmas Kouli Khân; or at least, describing the barbarous anarchic despotism of Turkey, where the finest countries in the most genial climates in the world are wasted by peace more than any countries have been worried by war; where arts are unknown, where manufactures languish, where science is extinguished, where agriculture decays, where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer. Was this the case of France? I have no way of determining the question but by a reference to facts. Facts do not support this resemblance. Along with much evil, there is some good in monarchy itself; and some corrective to its evil from religion, from laws, from manners, from opinions, the French monarchy must have received; which rendered it (though by no means a free, and therefore by no means a good constitution,) a despotism rather in appearance than in reality.

Among the standards upon which the effects of government on any country are to be estimated, I must consider the state of its population as not the least certain. No country in which population flourishes, and is in progressive improvement, can be under a *very* mischievous government. About sixty years ago, the intendants of the generalities of France made, with other matters, a report of the population of their several districts. I have not the books, which are very voluminous, by me, nor do I know where to procure them, (I am obliged to speak by memory, and therefore the less positively,) but I think the population of France, was by them, even at that period, estimated at twenty-two millions of souls. At the end of the last century it had been generally calculated at eighteen. On either of these estimations, France was not ill peopled. Mr. Necker, who is an authority for his own time at least equal to the intendants for theirs, reckons, and upon apparently sure principles, the people of France, in the year 1780, at twenty-four millions six hundred and seventy thousand. But was this the probable ultimate term under the old establishment? Dr. Price is of opinion, that the growth of

population in France was by no means at its *acmé* in that year. I certainly defer to Dr. Price's authority a good deal more in these speculations, than I do in his general politics. This gentleman, taking ground on Mr. Necker's data, is very confident that since the period of that minister's calculation, the French population has increased rapidly; so rapidly, that in the year 1789 he will not consent to rate the people of that kingdom at a lower number than thirty millions. After abating much (and much I think ought to be abated) from the sanguine calculation of Dr. Price, I have no doubt that the population of France did increase considerably during this latter period: but supposing that it increased to nothing more than will be sufficient to complete the twenty-four millions six hundred and seventy thousand to twenty-five millions, still a population of twenty-five millions, and that in an increasing progress, on a space of about twenty-seven thousand square leagues, is immense. It is, for instance, a good deal more than the proportionable population of this island, or even than that of England, the best-peopled part of the united kingdom.

It is not universally true, that France is a fertile country. Considerable tracts of it are barren, and labor under other natural disadvantages. In the portions of that territory, where things are more favorable, as far as I am able to discover, the numbers of the people correspond to the indulgence of nature.* The generality of Lisle (this I admit is the strongest example) upon an extent of four hundred and four leagues and a half, about ten years ago, contained seven hundred and thirty-four thousand six hundred souls, which is one thousand seven hundred and seventy-two inhabitants to each square league. The middle term for the rest of France is about nine hundred inhabitants to the same admeasurement.

I do not attribute this population to the deposed govern-

* De l' Administration des Finances de la France, par Mons. Necker, vol. i., p. 288.

ment; because I do not like to compliment the contrivances of men with what is due in a great degree to the bounty of Providence. But that decried government could not have obstructed, most probably it favored, the operation of those causes (whatever they were) whether of nature in the soil, or habits of industry among the people, which has produced so large a number of the species throughout that whole kingdom, and exhibited in some particular places such prodigies of population. I never will suppose that fabric of a state to be the worst of all political institutions, which, by experience, is found to contain a principle favorable (however latent it may be) to the increase of mankind.

The wealth of a country is another, and no contemptible standard, by which we may judge whether, on the whole, a government be protecting or destructive. France far exceeds England in the multitude of her people; but I apprehend that her comparative wealth is much inferior to ours; that it is not so equal in the distribution, nor so ready in the circulation. I believe the difference in the form of the two governments to be amongst the causes of this advantage on the side of England. I speak of England, not of the whole British dominions; which, if compared with those of France, will, in some degree, weaken the comparative rate of wealth upon our side. But that wealth, which will not endure a comparison with the riches of England, may constitute a very respectable degree of opulence. Mr. Necker's book, published in 1785,* contains an accurate and interesting collection of facts relative to public economy, and to political arithmetic; and his speculations on the subject are in general wise and liberal. In that work he gives an idea of the state of France, very remote from the portrait of a country whose government was a perfect grievance, an absolute evil, admitting no cure but through the violent and uncertain remedy of a total revolution. He affirms, that from the year 1726 to the year 1784, there was coined at the mint of France, in the species of gold

* De l'Administration des Finances de la France, par Mons. Necker.

and silver, to the amount of about one hundred millions of pounds sterling.*

It is impossible that Mr. Necker should be mistaken in the amount of the bullion which has been coined in the mint. It is a matter of official record. The reasonings of this able financier, concerning the quantity of gold and silver which remained for circulation, when he wrote in 1785, that is, about four years before the deposition and imprisonment of the French king, are not of equal certainty; but they are laid on grounds so apparently solid, that it is not easy to refuse a considerable degree of assent to his calculation. He calculates the *numeraire*, or what we call *specie*, then actually existing in France, at about eighty-eight millions of the same English money. A great accumulation of wealth for one country, large as that country is! Mr. Necker was so far from considering this influx of wealth as likely to cease, when he wrote in 1785, that he presumes upon a future annual increase of two per cent. upon the money brought into France during the periods from which he computed.

Some adequate cause must have originally introduced all the money coined at its mint into that kingdom; and some cause as operative must have kept at home, or returned into its bosom, such a vast flood of treasure as Mr. Necker calculates to remain for domestic circulation. Suppose any reasonable deductions from Mr. Necker's computation; the remainder must still amount to an immense sum. Causes thus powerful to acquire and to retain, cannot be found in discouraged industry, insecure property, and a positively destructive government. Indeed, when I consider the face of the kingdom of France; the multitude and opulence of her cities; the useful magnificence of her spacious high roads and bridges; the opportunity of her artificial canals and navigations opening the conveniences of maritime communication through a solid continent of so immense an extent; when I turn my eyes to the stupendous works of her ports and har-

* Vol. iii. chap. 8, and chap. 9.

bors, and to her whole naval apparatus, whether for war or trade; when I bring before my view the number of her fortifications, constructed with so bold and masterly a skill, and made and maintained at so prodigious a charge, presenting an armed front and impenetrable barrier to her enemies upon every side; when I recollect how very small a part of that extensive region is without cultivation, and to what complete perfection the culture of many of the best productions of the earth have been brought in France; when I reflect on the excellence of her manufactures and fabrics, second to none but ours, and in some particulars not second; when I contemplate the grand foundations of charity, public and private; when I survey the state of all the arts that beautify and polish life; when I reckon the men she has bred for extending her fame in war, her able statesmen, the multitude of her profound lawyers and theologians, her philosophers, her critics, her historians and antiquaries, her poets and her orators, sacred and profane; I behold in all this something which awes and commands the imagination, which checks the mind on the brink of precipitate and indiscriminate censure, and which demands, that we should very seriously examine, what and how great are the latent vices that could authorize us at once to level so spacious a fabric with the ground. I do not recognise, in this view of things, the despotism of Turkey. Nor do I discern the character of a government, that has been, on the whole, so oppressive, or so corrupt, or so negligent, as to be utterly unfit *for all reformation*. I must think such a government well deserved to have its excellencies heightened; its faults corrected; and its capacities improved into a British constitution.

Whoever has examined into the proceedings of that deposed government for several years back, cannot fail to have observed, amidst the inconstancy and fluctuation natural to courts, an earnest endeavor towards the prosperity and improvement of the country; he must admit, that it had long been employed, in some instances, wholly to remove, in many considerably to correct, the abusive practices and usages that

had prevailed in the state; and that even the unlimited power of the sovereign over the persons of his subjects, inconsistent, as undoubtedly it was, with law and liberty, had yet been every day growing more mitigated in the exercise. So far from refusing itself to reformation, that government was open, with a censurable degree of facility, to all sorts of projects and projectors on the subject. Rather too much countenance was given to the spirit of innovation, which soon was turned against those who fostered it, and ended in their ruin. It is but cold, and no very flattering justice to that fallen monarchy, to say, that, for many years, it trespassed more by levity and want of judgment in several of its schemes, than from any defect in diligence or in public spirit. To compare the government of France for the last fifteen or sixteen years with wise and well constituted establishments during that, or during any period, is not to act with fairness. But if in point of prodigality in the expenditure of money, or in point of rigor in the exercise of power, it be compared with any of the former reigns, I believe candid judges will give little credit to the good intentions of those who dwell perpetually on the donations to favorites, or on the expenses of the court, or on the horrors of the Bastile in the reign of Louis the Sixteenth.*

Whether the system, if it deserves such a name, now built on the ruins of that ancient monarchy, will be able to give a better account of the population and wealth of the country, which it has taken under its care, is a matter very doubtful. Instead of improving by the change, I apprehend that a long series of years must be told, before it can recover in any degree the effects of this philosophic revolution, and before the nation can be replaced on its former footing. If Dr. Price should think fit, a few years hence, to favor us with an estimate of the population of France, he will hardly be able to make up his tale of thirty millions of souls, as computed in 1789, or the assembly's computation of twenty-

* The world is obliged to Mr. de Calonne for the pains he has taken to refute the scandalous exaggerations relative to some of the royal expenses, and to detect the fallacious account given of pensions, for the wicked purpose of provoking the populace to all sorts of crimes.

six millions of that year; or even Mr. Necker's twenty-five millions in 1780. I hear that there are considerable emigrations from France; and that many, quitting that voluptuous climate, and that seductive *Circean* liberty, have taken refuge in the frozen regions, and under the British despotism of Canada.

In the present disappearance of coin, no person could think it the same country, in which the present minister of the finances has been able to discover fourscore millions sterling in specie. From its general aspect one would conclude that it had been for some time past under the special direction of the learned academicians of Laputa and Balnibarbi.* Already the population of Paris has so declined, that Mr. Necker stated to the national assembly the provision to be made for its subsistence at a fifth less than what had formerly been found requisite.† It is said (and I have never heard it contradicted) that a hundred thousand people are out of employment in that city, though it is become the seat of the imprisoned court and national assembly. Nothing, I am credibly informed, can exceed the shocking and disgusting spectacle of mendicancy displayed in that capital. Indeed the votes of the national assembly leave no doubt of the fact. They have lately appointed a standing committee of mendicancy. They are contriving at once a vigorous police on this subject, and, for the first time, the imposition of a tax to maintain the poor, for whose present relief great sums appear on the face of the public accounts of the year.‡ In the mean

* See Gulliver's Travels for the idea of countries governed by philosophers.

† Mr. de Calonne states the falling off of the population of Paris as far more considerable; and it may be so, since the period of Mr. Necker's calculation.

‡ Travaux de charité pour subvenir au manque de travail à Paris et dans les provinces - - - - -

	Livres	£	*s*	*d*
Destruction de vagabondage et de la mendicité - - - - - -	3,866,920—	161,121	13	4
Primes pour l'importation de grains	1,671,417—	69,642	7	6
Dépenses relatives aux subsistances, déduction fait des récouvrements qui ont eu lieu - - - - -	5,671,907—	236,329	9	2
Total,	39,871,790—	1,661,324	11	8
	51,032,034—	2,128,418	1	8

When I sent this book to the press, I entertained some doubt concerning the

time the leaders of the legislative clubs and coffee-houses are intoxicated with admiration at their own wisdom and ability. They speak with the most sovereign contempt of the rest of the world. They tell the people, to comfort them in the rags with which they have clothed them, that they are a nation of philosophers; and, sometimes, by all the arts of quackish parade, by shew, tumult, and bustle, sometimes by the alarms of plots and invasions, they attempt to drown the cries of indigence, and to divert the eyes of the observer from the ruin and wretchedness of the state. A brave people will certainly prefer liberty, accompanied with a virtuous poverty, to a depraved and wealthy servitude. But before the price of comfort and opulence is paid, one ought to be pretty sure it is real liberty which is purchased, and that she is to be purchased at no other price. I shall always, however, consider that liberty as very equivocal in her appearance, which has not wisdom and justice for her companions; and does not lead prosperity and plenty in her train.

The advocates for this revolution, not satisfied with exaggerating the vices of their ancient government, strike at the fame of their country itself, by painting almost all that could have attracted the attention of strangers, I mean their nobility and their clergy, as objects of horror. If this were only a libel, there had not been much in it. But it has practical consequences. Had your nobility and gentry, who formed the great body of your landed men, and the whole of your military officers, resembled those of Germany, at the period when the

nature and extent of the last article in the above accounts, which is only under a general head, without any detail. Since then I have seen Mr. de Calonne's work. I must think it a great loss to me that I had not that advantage earlier. Mr. de Calonne thinks this article to be on account of general subsistence: but as he is not able to comprehend how so great a loss as upwards of £1,661,000 sterling could be sustained on the difference between the price and the sale of grain, he seems to attribute this enormous head of charge to secret expenses of the revolution. I cannot say any thing positively on that subject. The reader is capable of judging, by the aggregate of these immense charges, on the state and condition of France; and the system of public economy adopted in that nation. These articles of account produced no inquiry or discussion in the national assembly.

Hanse-towns were necessitated to confederate against the nobles in defence of their property—had they been like the *Orsini* and *Vitelli* in Italy, who used to sally from their fortified dens to rob the trader and traveler—had they been such as the *Mamelukes* in Egypt, or the *Nayres* on the coast of Malabar, I do admit, that too critical an inquiry might not be advisable into the means of freeing the world from such a nuisance. The statues of Equity and Mercy might be veiled for a moment. The tenderest minds, confounded with the dreadful exigence in which morality submits to the suspension of its own rules in favor of its own principles, might turn aside whilst fraud and violence were accomplishing the destruction of a pretended nobility which disgraced, whilst it persecuted, human nature. The persons most abhorrent from blood, and treason, and arbitrary confiscation, might remain silent spectators of this civil war between the vices.

But did the privileged nobility who met under the king's precept at Versailles, in 1789, or their constituents, deserve to be looked on as the *Nayres* or *Mamelukes* of this age, or as the *Orsini* and *Vitelli* of ancient times? If I had then asked the question I should have passed for a madman. What have they since done that they were to be driven into exile, that their persons should be hunted about, mangled, and tortured, their families dispersed, their houses laid in ashes, and that their order should be abolished, and the memory of it, if possible, extinguished, by ordaining them to change the very names by which they were usually known? Read their instructions to their representatives. They breathe the spirit of liberty as warmly, and they recommend reformation as strongly, as any other order. Their privileges relative to contribution were voluntarily surrendered; as the king, from the beginning, surrendered all pretence to a right of taxation. Upon a free constitution there was but one opinion in France. The absolute monarchy was at an end. It breathed its last, without a groan, without struggle, without convulsion. All the struggle, all the dissension arose afterwards upon the preference of a despotic democracy to a government of reciprocal

control. The triumph of the victorious party was over the principles of a British constitution.

I have observed the affectation, which, for many years past, has prevailed in Paris even to a degree perfectly childish, of idolizing the memory of your Henry the Fourth. If any thing could put one out of humor with that ornament to the kingly character, it would be this overdone style of insidious panegyric. The persons who have worked this engine the most busily, are those who have ended their panegyrics in dethroning his successor and descendant; a man, as good-natured at the least, as Henry the Fourth; altogether as fond of his people; and who has done infinitely more to correct the ancient vices of the state than that great monarch did, or we are sure he ever meant to do. Well it is for his panegyrists that they have not him to deal with. For Henry of Navarre was a resolute, active, and politic prince. He possessed indeed great humanity and mildness; but a humanity and mildness that never stood in the way of his interests. He never sought to be loved without putting himself first in a condition to be feared. He used soft language with determined conduct. He asserted and maintained his authority in the gross, and distributed his acts of concession only in the detail. He spent the income of his prerogative nobly; but he took care not to break in upon the capital; never abandoning for a moment any of the claims, which he made under the fundamental laws, nor sparing to shed the blood of those who opposed him, often in the field, sometimes upon the scaffold. Because he knew how to make his virtues respected by the ungrateful, he has merited the praises of those, whom, if they had lived in his time, he would have shut up in the Bastile, and brought to punishment along with the regicides whom he hanged after he had famished Paris into a surrender.

If these panegyrists are in earnest in their admiration of Henry the Fourth, they must remember, that they cannot think more highly of him, than he did of the noblesse of France; whose virtue, honor, courage, patriotism, and loyalty were his constant theme.

But the nobility of France are degenerated since the days of Henry the Fourth. This is possible. But it is more than I can believe to be true in any great degree. I do not pretend to know France as correctly as some others; but I have endeavored through my whole life to make myself acquainted with human nature: otherwise I should be unfit to take even my humble part in the service of mankind. In that study I could not pass by a vast portion of our nature, as it appeared modified in a country but twenty-four miles from the shore of this island. On my best observation, compared with my best inquiries, I found your nobility for the greater part composed of men of a high spirit, and of a delicate sense of honor, both with regard to themselves individually, and with regard to their whole corps, over whom they kept, beyond what is common in other countries, a censorial eye. They were tolerably well-bred; very officious, humane, and hospitable; in their conversation frank and open; with a good military tone; and reasonably tinctured with literature, particularly of the authors in their own language. Many had pretensions far above this description. I speak of those who were generally met with.

As to their behavior to the inferior classes, they appeared to me to comport themselves towards them with good-nature, and with something more nearly approaching to familiarity, than is generally practised with us in the intercourse between the higher and lower ranks of life. To strike any person, even in the most abject condition, was a thing in a manner unknown, and would be highly disgraceful. Instances of other ill-treatment of the humble part of the community were rare; and as to attacks made upon the property or the personal liberty of the commons, I never heard of any whatsoever from *them;* nor, whilst the laws were in vigor under the ancient government, would such tyranny in subjects have been permitted. As men of landed estates, I had no fault to find with their conduct, though much to reprehend, and much to wish changed, in many of the old tenures. Where the letting of their land was by rent, I could not discover that their agree-

ments with their farmers were oppressive; nor when they were in partnership with the farmer, as often was the case, have I heard that they had taken the lion's share. The proportions seemed not inequitable. There might be exceptions; but certainly they were exceptions only. I have no reason to believe that in these respects the landed noblesse of France were worse than the landed gentry of this country; certainly in no respect more vexatious than the landholders, not noble, of their own nation. In cities the nobility had no manner of power; in the country very little. You know, sir, that much of the civil government, and the police in the most essential parts, was not in the hands of that nobility which presents itself first to our consideration. The revenue, the system and collection of which were the most grievous parts of the French government, was not administered by the men of the sword; nor were they answerable for the vices of its principle, or the vexations, where any such existed, in its management.

Denying, as I am well warranted to do, that the nobility had any considerable share in the oppression of the people, in cases in which real oppression existed, I am ready to admit that they were not without considerable faults and errors. A foolish imitation of the worst part of the manners of England, which impaired their natural character, without substituting in its place what perhaps they meant to copy, has certainly rendered them worse than formerly they were. Habitual dissoluteness of manners continued beyond the pardonable period of life, was more common amongst them than it is with us; and it reigned with the less hope of remedy, though possibly with something of less mischief, by being covered with more exterior decorum. They countenanced too much that licentious philosophy which has helped to bring on their ruin. There was another error amongst them more fatal. Those of the commons, who approached to or exceeded many of the nobility in point of wealth, were not fully admitted to the rank and estimation which wealth, in reason and good policy, ought to bestow in every country; though I think not equally

with that of other nobility. The two kinds of aristocracy were too punctiliously kept asunder; less so, however, than in Germany and some other nations.

This separation, as I have already taken the liberty of suggesting to you, I conceive to be one principal cause of the destruction of the old nobility. The military, particularly, was too exclusively reserved for men of family. But, after all, this was an error of opinion, which a conflicting opinion would have rectified. A permanent assembly, in which the commons had their share of power, would soon abolish whatever was too invidious and insulting in these distinctions; and even the faults in the morals of the nobility would have been probably corrected by the greater varieties of occupation and pursuit to which a constitution by orders would have given rise.

All this violent cry against the nobility I take to be a mere work of art. To be honored and even privileged by the laws, opinions, and inveterate usages of our country, growing out of the prejudice of ages, has nothing to provoke horror and indignation in any man. Even to be too tenacious of those privileges is not absolutely a crime. The strong struggle in every individual to preserve possession of what he has found to belong to him, and to distinguish him, is one of the securities against injustice and despotism implanted in our nature. It operates as an instinct to secure property, and to preserve communities in a settled state. What is there to shock in this? Nobility is a graceful ornament to the civil order. It is the Corinthian capital of polished society. *Omnes boni nobilitati semper favemus* was the saying of a wise and good man. It is indeed one sign of a liberal and benevolent mind to incline to it with some sort of partial propensity. He feels no ennobling principle in his own heart, who wishes to level all the artificial institutions which have been adopted for giving a body to opinion, and permanence to fugitive esteem. It is a sour, malignant, envious disposition, without taste for the reality, or for any image or representation of virtue, that sees with joy the

unmerited fall of what had long flourished in splendor and in honor. I do not like to see any thing destroyed; any void produced in society; any ruin on the face of the land. It was therefore with no disappointment or dissatisfaction that my inquiries and observations did not present to me any incorrigible vices in the noblesse of France, or any abuse which could not be removed by a reform very short of abolition. Your noblesse did not deserve punishment; but to degrade is to punish.

It was with the same satisfaction I found that the result of my inquiry concerning your clergy was not dissimilar. It is no soothing news to my ears, that great bodies of men are incurably corrupt. It is not with much credulity I listen to any, when they speak evil of those whom they are going to plunder. I rather suspect that vices are feigned or exaggerated, when profit is looked for in their punishment. An enemy is a bad witness: a robber is a worse. Vices and abuses there were undoubtedly in that order, and must be. It was an old establishment, and not frequently revised. But I saw no crimes in the individuals that merited confiscation of their substance, nor those cruel insults and degradations, and that unnatural persecution which have been substituted in the place of meliorating regulation.

If there had been any just cause for this new religious persecution, the atheistic libelers, who act as trumpeters to animate the populace to plunder, do not love any body so much as not to dwell with complacence on the vices of the existing clergy. This they have not done. They find themselves obliged to rake into the histories of former ages (which they have ransacked with a malignant and profligate industry) for every instance of oppression and persecution which has been made by that body or in its favor, in order to justify, upon very iniquitous, because very illogical principles of retaliation, their own persecutions, and their own cruelties. After destroying all other genealogies and family distinctions, they invent a sort of pedigree of crimes. It is not very just to chastise men for the offences of their natural ancestors;

but to take the fiction of ancestry in a corporate succession, as a ground for punishing men who have no relation to guilty acts, except in names and general descriptions, is a sort of refinement in injustice belonging to the philosophy of this enlightened age. The assembly punishes men, many, if not most, of whom abhor the violent conduct of ecclesiastics in former times as much as their present persecutors can do, and who would be as loud and as strong in the expression of that sense, if they were not well aware of the purposes for which all this declamation is employed.

Corporate bodies are immortal for the good of the members, but not for their punishment. Nations themselves are such corporations. As well might we in England think of waging inexpiable war upon all Frenchmen for the evils which they have brought upon us in the several periods of our mutual hostilities. You might, on your part, think yourselves justified in falling upon all Englishmen on account of the unparalleled calamities brought upon the people of France by the unjust invasions of our Henries and our Edwards. Indeed we should be mutually justified in this exterminatory war upon each other, full as much as you are in the unprovoked persecution of your present countrymen, on account of the conduct of men of the same name in other times.

We do not draw the moral lessons we might from history. On the contrary, without care it may be used to vitiate our minds and to destroy our happiness. In history a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind. It may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in church and state, and supplying the means of keeping alive, or reviving dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury. History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all

the train of disorderly appetites, which shake the public with the same

—— "troublous storms that toss
"The private state, and render life unsweet."

These vices are the *causes* of those storms. Religion, morals, laws, prerogatives, privileges, liberties, rights of men, are the *pretexts*. The pretexts are always found in some specious appearance of a real good. You would not secure men from tyranny and sedition, by rooting out of the mind the principles to which these fraudulent pretexts apply? If you did, you would root out every thing that is valuable in the human breast. As these are the pretexts, so the ordinary actors and instruments in great public evils are kings, priests, magistrates, senates, parliaments, national assemblies, judges, and captains. You would not cure the evil by resolving, that there should be no more monarchs, nor ministers of state, nor of the gospel; no interpreters of law; no general officers; no public councils. You might change the names. The things in some shape must remain. A certain *quantum* of power must always exist in the community, in some hands, and under some appellation. Wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the causes of evil which are permanent, not to the occasional organs by which they act, and the transitory modes in which they appear. Otherwise you will be wise historically, a fool in practice. Seldom have two ages the same fashion in their pretexts and the same modes of mischief. Wickedness is a little more inventive. Whilst you are discussing fashion, the fashion is gone by. The very same vice assumes a new body. The spirit transmigrates; and, far from losing its principle of life by the change of its appearance, it is renovated in its new organs with the fresh vigor of a juvenile activity. It walks abroad; it continues its ravages; whilst you are gibbeting the carcass, or demolishing the tomb. You are terrifying yourselves with ghosts and apparitions, whilst your house is

the haunt of robbers. It is thus with all those, who, attending only to the shell and husk of history, think they are waging war with intolerance, pride, and cruelty, whilst, under color of abhorring the ill principles of antiquated parties, they are authorizing and feeding the same odious vices in different factions, and perhaps in worse.

Your citizens of Paris formerly had lent themselves as the ready instruments to slaughter the followers of Calvin, at the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew. What should we say to those who could think of retaliating on the Parisians of this day the abominations and horrors of that time? They are indeed brought to abhor *that* massacre. Ferocious as they are, it is not difficult to make them dislike it; because the politicians and fashionable teachers have no interest in giving their passions exactly the same direction. Still however they find it their interest to keep the same savage dispositions alive. It was but the other day that they caused this very massacre to be acted on the stage for the diversion of the descendants of those who committed it. In this tragic farce they produced the cardinal of Lorraine in his robes of function, ordering general slaughter. Was this spectacle intended to make the Parisians abhor persecution, and loathe the effusion of blood? No; it was to teach them to persecute their own pastors; it was to excite them, by raising a disgust and horror of their clergy, to an alacrity in hunting down to destruction an order, which, if it ought to exist at all, ought to exist not only in safety, but in reverence. It was to stimulate their cannibal appetites (which one would think had been gorged sufficiently) by variety and seasoning; and to quicken them to an alertness in new murders and massacres, if it should suit the purpose of the Guises of the day. An assembly, in which sat a multitude of priests and prelates, was obliged to suffer this indignity at its door. The author was not sent to the galleys, nor the players to the house of correction. Not long after this exhibition, those players came forward to the assembly to claim the rites of that very religion which they had dared to expose, and to shew their prostituted

faces in the senate, whilst the archbishop of Paris, whose function was known to his people only by his prayers and benedictions, and his wealth only by alms, is forced to abandon his house, and to fly from his flock (as from ravenous wolves) because, truly, in the sixteenth century, the cardinal of Lorraine was a rebel and murderer.*

Such is the effect of the perversion of history, by those, who, for the same nefarious purposes, have perverted every other part of learning. But those who will stand upon that elevation of reason, which places centuries under our eye, and brings things to the true point of comparison, which obscures little names, and effaces the colors of little parties, and to which nothing can ascend but the spirit and moral quality of human actions, will say, to the teachers of the Palais Royal,—the cardinal of Lorraine was the murderer of the sixteenth century, you have the glory of being the murderers in the eighteenth; and this is the only difference between you. But history, in the nineteenth century, better understood, and better employed, will, I trust, teach a civilized posterity to abhor the misdeeds of both these barbarous ages. It will teach future priests and magistrates not to retaliate upon the speculative and inactive atheists of future times, the enormities committed by the present practical zealots and furious fanatics of that wretched error, which, in its quiescent state, is more than punished, whenever it is embraced. It will teach posterity not to make war upon either religion or philosophy, for the abuse which the hypocrites of both have made of the two most valuable blessings conferred upon us by the bounty of the universal Patron, who in all things eminently favors and protects the race of man.

If your clergy, or any clergy, should shew themselves vicious beyond the fair bounds allowed to human infirmity, and to those professional faults which can hardly be separated from professional virtues, though their vices never can counte-

* This is on a supposition of the truth of this story; but he was not in France at the time. One name serves as well as another.

nance the exercise of oppression, I do admit, that they would naturally have the effect of abating very much of our indignation against the tyrants who exceed measure and justice in their punishment. I can allow in clergymen, through all their divisions, some tenaciousness of their own opinion; some overflowings of zeal for its propagation; some predilection to their own state and office; some attachment to the interest of their own corps; some preference to those who listen with docility to their doctrines, beyond those who scorn and deride them. I allow all this, because I am a man who have to deal with men, and who would not, through a violence of toleration, run into the greatest of all intolerance. I must bear with infirmities until they fester into crimes.

Undoubtedly, the natural progress of the passions, from frailty to vice, ought to be prevented by a watchful eye and a firm hand. But it is true that the body of your clergy had past those limits of a just allowance? From the general style of your late publications of all sorts, one would be led to believe that your clergy in France were a sort of monsters; an horrible composition of superstition, ignorance, sloth, fraud, avarice, and tyranny. But is this true? Is it true, that the lapse of time, the cessation of conflicting interests, the woful experience of the evils resulting from party rage, have had no sort of influence gradually to meliorate their minds? Is it true, that they were daily renewing invasions on the civil power, troubling the domestic quiet of their country, and rendering the operations of its government feeble and precarious? Is it true, that the clergy of our times have pressed down the laity with an iron hand, and were, in all places, lighting up the fires of a savage persecution? Did they by every fraud endeavor to increase their estates? Did they use to exceed the due demands on estates that were their own? Or, rigidly screwing up right into wrong, did they convert a legal claim into a vexatious extortion? When not possessed of power, where they filled with the vices of those who envy it? Were they inflamed with a violent litigious spirit of controversy? Goaded on with the ambition of intellectual sover-

eignty were they ready to fly in the face of all magistracy, to fire churches, to massacre the priests of other descriptions, to pull down altars, and to make their way over the ruins of subverted governments to an empire of doctrine, sometimes flattering, sometimes forcing the consciences of men from the jurisdiction of public institutions into a submission to their personal authority, beginning with a claim of liberty and ending with an abuse of power?

These, or some of these, were the vices objected, and not wholly without foundation, to several of the churchmen of former times, who belonged to the two great parties which then divided and distracted Europe.

If there was in France, as in other countries there visibly is, a great abatement, rather than any increase of these vices, instead of loading the present clergy with the crimes of other men, and the odious character of other times, in common equity they ought to be praised, encouraged, and supported, in their departure from a spirit which disgraced their predecessors, and for having assumed a temper of mind and manners more suitable to their sacred function.

When my occasions took me into France, towards the close of the late reign, the clergy, under all their forms, engaged a considerable part of my curiosity. So far from finding (except from one set of men, not then very numerous though very active,) the complaints and discontents against that body, which some publications had given me reason to expect, I perceived little or no public or private uneasiness on their account. On further examination, I found the clergy in general, persons of moderate minds and decorous manners; I include the seculars, and the regulars of both sexes. I had not the good fortune to know a great many of the parochial clergy; but in general I received a perfectly good account of their morals, and of their attention to their duties. With some of the higher clergy I had a personal acquaintance; and of the rest in that class, a very good means of information. They were, almost all of them, persons of noble birth. They resembled others of their own rank; and where there was any

difference, it was in their favor. They were more fully educated than the military noblesse; so as by no means to disgrace their profession by ignorance, or by want of fitness for the exercise of their authority. They seemed to me, beyond the clerical character, liberal and open; with the hearts of gentlemen and men of honor; neither insolent nor servile in their manners and conduct. They seemed to me rather a superior class; a set of men, amongst whom you would not be surprised to find a *Fenelon*. I saw among the clergy in Paris (many of the description are to be met with any where) men of great learning and candor; and I had reason to believe, that this description was not confined to Paris. What I found in other places, I know was accidental; and therefore to be presumed a fair sample. I spent a few days in a provincial town, where, in the absence of the bishop, I passed my evenings with three clergymen, his vicars-general, persons who would have done honor to any church. They were all well informed; two of them of deep, general, and extensive erudition, ancient and modern, oriental and western; particularly in their own profession. They had a more extensive knowledge of our English divines than I expected, and they entered into the genius of those writers with a critical accuracy. One of these gentlemen is since dead, the Abbé *Morangis*. I pay this tribute, without reluctance, to the memory of that noble, reverend, learned, and excellent person; and I should do the same with equal cheerfulness, to the merits of the others, who I believe are still living, if I did not fear to hurt those whom I am unable to serve.

Some of these ecclesiastics, of rank, are, by all titles, persons deserving of general respect. They are deserving of gratitude from me, and from many English. If this letter should ever come into their hands, I hope they will believe there are those of our nation who feel for their unmerited fall, and for the cruel confiscation of their fortunes, with no common sensibility. What I say of them is a testimony, as far as one feeble voice can go, which I owe to truth. Whenever the question of this unnatural persecution is concerned, I

will pay it. No one shall prevent me from being just and grateful. The time is fitted for the duty; and it is particularly becoming to shew our justice and gratitude, when those who have deserved well of us and of mankind are laboring under popular obloquy and the persecutions of oppressive power.

You had before your revolution about an hundred and twenty bishops. A few of them were men of eminent sanctity, and charity without limit. When we talk of the heroic, of course we talk of rare, virtue. I believe the instances of eminent depravity may be as rare amongst them as those of transcendent goodness. Examples of avarice and of licentiousness may be picked out, I do not question it, by those who delight in the investigation which leads to such discoveries. A man, as old as I am, will not be astonished that several, in every description, do not lead that perfect life of self-denial, with regard to wealth or to pleasure, which is wished for by all, by some expected, but by none exacted with more rigor, than by those who are the most attentive to their own interests, or the most indulgent to their own passions. When I was in France, I am certain that the number of vicious prelates was not great. Certain individuals among them, not distinguishable for the regularity of their lives, made some amends for their want of the severe virtues, in their possession of the liberal; and were endowed with qualities which made them useful in the church and state. I am told, that with few exceptions, Louis the Sixteenth had been more attentive to character, in his promotions to that rank, than his immediate predecessor; and I believe (as some spirit of reform has prevailed through the whole reign) that it may be true. But the present ruling power has shewn a disposition only to plunder the church. It has punished *all* prelates; which is to favor the vicious, at least in point of reputation. It has made a degrading pensionary establishment, to which no man of liberal ideas or liberal condition will destine his children. It must settle into the lowest classes of the people. As with you the inferior clergy are not numerous enough for their

duties; as these duties are, beyond measure, minute and toilsome; as you have left no middle classes of clergy at their ease, in future nothing of science or erudition can exist in the Gallican church. To complete the project, without the least attention to the rights of patrons, the assembly has provided in future an elective clergy; an arrangement which will drive out of the clerical profession all men of sobriety; all who can pretend to independence in their function or their conduct; and which will throw the whole direction of the public mind into the hands of a set of licentious, bold, crafty, factious, flattering wretches, of such condition and such habits of life as will make their contemptible pensions (in comparison of which the stipend of an exciseman is lucrative and honorable) an object of low and illiberal intrigue. Those officers, whom they still call bishops, are to be elected to a provision comparatively mean, through the same arts, (that is, electioneering arts,) by men of all religious tenets that are known or can be invented. The new lawgivers have not ascertained any thing whatsoever concerning their qualifications, relative either to doctrine or to morals; no more than they have done with regard to the subordinate clergy; nor does it appear but that both the higher and the lower may, at their discretion, practise or preach any mode of religion or irreligion that they please. I do not yet see what the jurisdiction of bishops over their subordinates is to be; or whether they are to have any jurisdiction at all.

In short, sir, it seems to me, that this new ecclesiastical establishment is intended only to be temporary, and preparatory to the utter abolition, under any of its forms, of the christian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this last stroke against it, by the accomplishment of the plan for bringing its ministers into universal contempt. They who will not believe, that the philosophical fanatics who guide in these matters, have long entertained such a design, are utterly ignorant of their character and proceedings. These enthusiasts do not scruple to avow their opinion, that a state can subsist without any religion better than with one: and

that they are able to supply the place of any good which may be in it, by a project of their own—namely, by a sort of education they have imagined, founded in a knowledge of the physical wants of men; progressively carried to an enlightened self-interest, which, when well understood, they tell us, will identify with an interest more enlarged and public. The scheme of this education has been long known. Of late they distinguish it (as they have got an entire new nomenclature of technical terms) by the name of a *Civic Education.*

I hope their partisans in England (to whom I rather attribute very inconsiderate conduct than the ultimate object in this detestable design) will succeed neither in the pillage of the ecclesiastics, nor in the introduction of a principle of popular election to our bishoprics and parochial cures. This, in the present condition of the world, would be the last corruption of the church; the utter ruin of the clerical character; the most dangerous shock that the state ever received through a misunderstood arrangement of religion. I know well enough that the bishoprics and cures, under kingly and seignoral patronage, as now they are in England, and as they have been lately in France, are sometimes acquired by unworthy methods; but the other mode of ecclesiastical canvass subjects them infinitely more surely and more generally to all the evil arts of low ambition, which, operating on, and through greater numbers, will produce mischief in proportion.

Those of you who have robbed the clergy, think that they shall easily reconcile their conduct to all protestant nations; because the clergy, whom they have thus plundered, degraded, and given over to mockery and scorn, are of the Roman Catholic, that is, of *their own* pretended persuasion. I have no doubt that some miserable bigots will be found here as well as elsewhere, who hate sects and parties different from their own, more than they love the substance of religion; and who are more angry with those who differ from them in their particular plans and systems, than displeased with those who attack the foundation of our common hope. These men will write and speak on the subject in the manner that is to be

expected from their temper and character. Burnet says, that when he was in France, in the year 1683, "the method which carried over the men of the finest parts to popery was this—— they brought themselves to doubt of the whole christian religion. When that was once done, it seemed a more indifferent thing of what side or form they continued outwardly." If this was then the ecclesiastic policy of France, it is what they have since but too much reason to repent of. They preferred atheism to a form of religion not agreeable to their ideas. They succeeded in destroying that form; and atheism has succeeded in destroying them. I can readily give credit to Burnet's story, because I have observed too much of a similar spirit (for a little of it is "much too much") amongst ourselves. The humor, however, is not general.

The teachers who reformed our religion in England bore no sort of resemblance to your present reforming doctors in Paris. Perhaps they were (like those whom they opposed) rather more than could be wished under the influence of a party spirit; but they were most sincere believers; men of the most fervent and exalted piety; ready to die (as some of them did die) like true heroes in defence of their particular ideas of christianity; as they would with equal fortitude, and more cheerfully, for that stock of general truth, for the branches of which they contended with their blood. These men would have disavowed with horror those wretches who claimed a fellowship with them upon no other titles than those of their having pillaged the persons with whom they maintained controversies, and their having despised the common religion, for the purity of which they exerted themselves with a zeal, which unequivocally bespoke their highest reverence for the substance of that system which they wished to reform. Many of their descendants have retained the same zeal, but (as less engaged in conflict) with more moderation. They do not forget that justice and mercy are substantial parts of religion. Impious men do not recommend themselves to their communion by iniquity and cruelty towards any description of their fellow-creatures.

We hear these new teachers continually boasting of their spirit of toleration. That those persons should tolerate all opinions, who think none to be of estimation, is a matter of small merit. Equal neglect is not impartial kindness. The species of benevolence, which arises from contempt, is no true charity. There are in England abundance of men who tolerate in the true spirit of toleration. They think the dogmas of religion, though in different degrees, are all of moment; and that amongst them there is, as amongst all things of value, a just ground of preference. They favor, therefore, and they tolerate. They tolerate, not because they despise opinions, but because they respect justice. They would reverently and affectionately protect all religions, because they love and venerate the great principle upon which they all agree, and the great object to which they are all directed. They begin more and more plainly to discern, that we have all a common cause, as against a common enemy. They will not be so misled by the spirit of faction, as not to distinguish what is done in favor of their subdivision, from those acts of hostility, which, through some particular description, are aimed at the whole corps, in which they themselves, under another denomination, are included. It is impossible for me to say what may be the character of every description of men amongst us. But I speak for the greater part; and for them, I must tell you, that sacrilege is no part of their doctrine of good works; that, so far from calling you into their fellowship on such title, if your professors are admitted to their communion, they must carefully conceal their doctrine of the lawfulness of the proscription of innocent men; and that they must make restitution of all stolen goods whatsoever. Till then they are none of ours.

You may suppose that we do not approve your confiscation of the revenues of bishops, and deans, and chapters, and parochial clergy, possessing independent estates arising from land, because we have the same sort of establishment in England. That objection, you will say, cannot hold as to the confiscation of the goods of monks and nuns, and the abolition

of their order. It is true that this particular part of your general confiscation does not affect England, as a precedent in point: but the reason applies, and it goes a great way. The long parliament confiscated the lands of deans and chapters in England on the same ideas upon which your assembly set to sale the lands of the monastic orders. But it is in the principle of injustice that the danger lies, and not in the description of persons on whom it is first exercised. I see, in a country very near us, a course of policy pursued, which sets justice, the common concern of mankind, at defiance. With the national assembly of France, possession is nothing, law and usage are nothing. I see the national assembly openly reprobate the doctrine of prescription, which one of the greatest of their own lawyers* tells us, with great truth, is a part of the law of nature. He tells us, that the positive ascertainment of its limits, and its security from invasion, were among the causes for which civil society itself has been instituted. If prescription be once shaken, no species of property is secure, when it once becomes an object large enough to tempt the cupidity of indigent power. I see a practice perfectly correspondent to their contempt of this great fundamental part of natural law. I see the confiscators begin with bishops, and chapters, and monasteries; but I do not see them end there. I see the princes of the blood, who, by the oldest usages of that kingdom, held large landed estates, (hardly with the compliment of a debate) deprived of their possessions, and in lieu of their stable independent property, reduced to the hope of some precarious, charitable pension, at the pleasure of an assembly, which of course will pay little regard to the rights of pensioners at pleasure, when it despises those of legal proprietors. Flushed with the insolence of their first inglorious victories, and pressed by the distresses caused by the lust of unhallowed lucre, disappointed but not discouraged, they have at length ventured completely to subvert all property of all descriptions throughout the extent of a great

* Domat.

kingdom. They have compelled all men, in all transactions of commerce, in the disposal of lands, in civil dealing, and through the whole communion of life, to accept as perfect payment and good and lawful tender, the symbols of their speculations on a projected sale of their plunder. What vestiges of liberty or property have they left? The tenant-right of a cabbage garden, a year's interest in a hovel, the good-will of an alehouse or a baker's shop, the very shadow of a constructive property, are more ceremoniously treated in our parliament than with you the oldest and most valuable landed possessions, in the hands of the most respectable personages, or than the whole body of the monied and commercial interest of your country. We entertain a high opinion of the legislative authority; but we have never dreamt that parliaments had any right whatever to violate property, to overrule prescription, or to force a currency of their own fiction in the place of that which is real, and recognised by the law of nations. But you, who began with refusing to submit to the most moderate restraints, have ended by establishing an unheard-of despotism. I find the ground upon which your confiscators go is this; that indeed their proceedings could not be supported in a court of justice; but that the rules of prescription cannot bind a legislative assembly.* So that this legislative assembly of a free nation sits, not for the security, but for the destruction of property, and not of property only, but of every rule and maxim which can give it stability, and of those instruments which can alone give it circulation.

When the anabaptists of Munster, in the sixteenth century, had filled Germany with confusion, by their system of leveling, and their wild opinions concerning property, to what country in Europe did not the progress of their fury furnish just cause of alarm? Of all things, wisdom is the most terrified with epidemical fanaticism, because of all enemies it is that against which she is the least able to furnish any kind of resource. We cannot be ignorant of the spirit of atheistical

* Speech of Mr. Camus, published by order of the national assembly.

fanaticism, that is inspired by a multitude of writings, dispersed with incredible assiduity and expense, and by sermons delivered in all the streets and places of public resort in Paris. These writings and sermons have filled the populace with a black and savage atrocity of mind, which supersedes in them the common feelings of nature, as well as all sentiments of morality and religion; insomuch that these wretches are induced to bear with a sullen patience the intolerable distresses brought upon them by the violent convulsions and permutations that have been made in property.* The spirit of proselytism attends this spirit of fanaticism. They have societies to cabal and correspond at home and abroad for the propagation of their tenets. The republic of Berne, one of the happiest, the most prosperous, and the best governed countries upon earth, is one of the great objects, at the destruction of which they aim. I am told they have in some measure succeeded in sowing there the seeds of discontent. They are busy throughout Germany. Spain and Italy have not been untried. England is not left out of the comprehensive scheme of their malignant charity; and in

* Whether the following description is strictly true I know not; but it is what the publishers would have pass for true, in order to animate others. In a letter from Toul, given in one of their papers, is the following passage concerning the people of that district: "Dans la révolution actuelle, ils ont résisté à toutes les *séductions du bigotisme, aux persécutions et aux tracasseries* des ennemis de la révolution. *Oubliant leurs plus grands intérêts* pour rendre hommage aux vues d'ordre général qui ont déterminé l'assemblée nationale, ils voient, *sans se plaindre*, supprimer cette foule d'établissemens ecclésiastiques par lesquels *ils subsistoient*; et même, en perdant leur siège épiscopal, la seul de toutes ses ressources qui pouvoit, ou plutôt *qui devoit, en toute équité*, leur être conservée; condamnés *à la plus effrayante misère*, sans avoir *été ni pu être entendus, ils ne murmurent point*, ils restent fidèles aux principes du plus pur patriotisme; ils sont encore prêtes à *verser leur sang* pour le maintien de la constitution, qui va réduire leur ville *à la plus déplorable nullité*." These people are not supposed to have endured those sufferings and injustices in a struggle for liberty, for the same account states truly that they had been always free; their patience in beggary and ruin, and their suffering, without remonstrance, the most flagrant and confessed injustice, if strictly true, can be nothing but the effect of this dire fanaticism. A great multitude all over France is in the same condition and the same temper.

England we find those who stretch out their arms to them, who recommend their example from more than one pulpit, and who choose, in more than one periodical meeting, publicly to correspond with them, to applaud them, and to hold them up as objects for imitation; who receive from them tokens of confraternity, and standards consecrated amidst their rites and mysteries;* who suggest to them leagues of perpetual amity, at the very time when the power, to which our constitution, has exclusively delegated the federative capacity of this kingdom, may find it expedient to make war upon them.

It is not the confiscation of our church property from this example in France that I dread, though I think this would be no trifling evil. The great source of my solicitude is, lest it should ever be considered in England as the policy of a state to seek a resource in confiscations of any kind; or that any one description of citizens should be brought to regard any of the others as their proper prey.† Nations are wading deeper and deeper into an ocean of boundless debt. Public debts which at first were a security to governments, by interesting many in the public tranquillity, are likely in their excess to become the means of their subversion. If govern-

* See the proceedings of the confederation at *Nantz*.

† "Si plures sunt ii, quibus improbe datum est, quam illi, quibus injuste ademptum est, idcirco plus etiam valent. Non enim numero hæc judicantur sed pondere. Quam autem habet æquitatem, ut agrum multis annis, aut etiam seculis ante possessum, qui nullum habuit, habeat: qui autem habuit, amittat? Ac, propter hoc injuriæ genus, Lacedæmonii Lysandrum Ephorum expulerunt: Agin regem (quod nunquam antea apud eos acciderat) necaverunt: ex eoque tempore tantæ discordiæ secutæ sunt, ut et tyranni exsisterent, et optimates exterminarentur, et præclarissime constituta respublica dilaberetur. Nec vero solum ipsa cecidit, sed etiam reliquam Græciam evertit contagionibus malorum, quæ, a Lacedæmoniis profectæ, manarunt latius."—After speaking of the conduct of the model of true patriots, Aratus of Sicyon, which was in a very different spirit, he says, "Sic par est agere cum civibus; non (ut bis jam vidimus) hastam in foro ponere et bona civium voci subjicere præconis. At ille Græcus (id quod fuit sapientis et præstantis viri) omnibus consulendum esse putavit: eaque est summa ratio et sapientia boni civis, commoda civium non divellere, atque omnes eadem æquitate continere."—Cic. Off. 2. 22, 23.

ments provide for these debts by heavy impositions, they perish by becoming odious to the people. If they do not provide for them, they will be undone by the efforts of the most dangerous of all parties; I mean an extensive discontented monied interest, injured and not destroyed. The men who compose this interest look for their security, in the first instance, to the fidelity of government; in the second, to its power. If they find the old governments effete, worn out, and with their springs relaxed, so as not to be of sufficient vigor for their purposes, they may seek new ones that shall be possessed of more energy; and this energy will be derived, not from an acquisition of resources, but from a contempt of justice. Revolutions are favorable to confiscation; and it is impossible to know under what obnoxious names the next confiscations will be authorized. I am sure that the principles predominant in France extend to very many persons and descriptions of persons in all countries who think their innoxious indolence their security. This kind of innocence in proprietors may be argued into inutility: and inutility into an unfitness for their estates. Many parts of Europe are in open disorder. In many others there is a hollow murmuring under ground; and a confused movement is felt, that threatens a general earthquake in the political world. Already confederacies and correspondences of the most extraordinary nature are forming, in several countries.* In such a state of things we ought to hold ourselves upon our guard. In all mutations (if mutations must be) the circumstance which will serve most to blunt the edge of their mischief, and to promote what good may be in them, is, that they should find us with our minds tenacious of justice, and tender of property.

But it will be argued, that this confiscation in France ought not to alarm other nations. They say it is not made from wanton rapacity; that it is a great measure of national policy;

* See two books entitled, Enige Originalschriften des Illuminatenordens.—System und Folgen des Illuminatenordens. Munchen, 1787.

adopted to remove an extensive, inveterate, superstitious mischief. It is with the greatest difficulty that I am able to separate policy from justice. Justice is itself the great standing policy of civil society; and any eminent departure from it, under any circumstances, lies under the suspicion of being no policy at all.

When men are encouraged to go into a certain mode of life by the existing laws, and protected in that mode as in a lawful occupation—when they have accommodated all their ideas and all their habits to it—when the law had long made their adherence to its rules a ground of reputation, and their departure from them a ground of disgrace and even of penalty—I am sure it is unjust in legislature by an arbitrary act, to offer a sudden violence to their minds and their feelings; forcibly to degrade them from their state and condition, and to stigmatize with shame and infamy that character and those customs which before had been made the measure of their happiness and honor. If to this be added an expulsion from their habitations, and a confiscation of all their goods, I am not sagacious enough to discover how this despotic sport, made of the feelings, consciences, prejudices, and properties of men, can be discriminated from the rankest tyranny.

If the injustice of the course pursued in France be clear, the policy of the measure, that is, the public benefit to be expected from it, ought to be at least as evident and at least as important. To a man who acts under the influence of no passion, who has nothing in view in his projects but the public good, a great difference will immediately strike him, between what policy would dictate on the original introduction of such institutions, and on a question of their total abolition, where they have cast their roots wide and deep, and where, by long habit, things more valuable than themselves are so adapted to them, and in a manner interwoven with them, that the one cannot be destroyed without notably impairing the other. He might be embarrassed if the case were really such as sophisters represent it in their paltry style of debating.

But in this, as in most questions of state, there is a middle. There is something else than the mere alternative of absolute destruction, or unreformed existence. *Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna.* This is, in my opinion, a rule of profound sense, and ought never to depart from the mind of an honest reformer. I cannot conceive how any man can have brought himself to that pitch of presumption, to consider his country as nothing but *carte blanche*, upon which he may scribble whatever he pleases. A man full of warm speculative benevolence may wish his society otherwise constituted than he finds it; but a good patriot, and a true politician, always considers how he shall make the most of the existing materials of his country. A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman. Every thing else is vulgar in the conception, perilous in the execution.

There are moments in the fortune of states when particular men are called to make improvements by great mental exertion. In those moments, even when they seem to enjoy the confidence of their prince and country, and to be invested with full authority, they have not always apt instruments. A politician, to do great things, looks for a *power*, what our workmen call a *purchase;* and if he finds that power, in politics as in mechanics, he cannot be at a loss to apply it. In the monastic institutions, in my opinion, was found a great *power* for the mechanism of politic benevolence. There were revenues with a public direction; there were men wholly set apart and dedicated to public purposes, without any other than public ties and public principles; men without the possibility of converting the estate of the community into a private fortune; men denied to self-interests, whose avarice is for some community; men to whom personal poverty is honor, and implicit obedience stands in the place of freedom. In vain shall a man look to the possibility of making such things when he wants them. The winds blow as they list. These institutions are the products of enthusiasm; they are the instruments of wisdom. Wisdom

cannot create materials; they are the gifts of nature or of chance; her pride is in the use. The perennial existence of bodies corporate and their fortunes, are things particularly suited to a man who has long views; who meditates designs that require time in fashioning; and which propose duration when they are accomplished. He is not deserving to rank high, or even to be mentioned in the order of great statesmen, who, having obtained the command and direction of such a power as existed in the wealth, the discipline, and the habits of such corporations, as those which you have rashly destroyed, cannot find any way of converting it to the great and lasting benefit of his country. On the view of this subject, a thousand uses suggest themselves to a contriving mind. To destroy any power, growing wild from the rank productive force of the human mind, is almost tantamount, in the moral world, to the destruction of the apparently active properties of bodies in the material. It would be like the attempt to destroy (if it were in our competence to destroy) the expansive force of fixed air in nitre, or the power of steam, or of electricity, or of magnetism. These energies always existed in nature, and they were always discernible. They seemed, some of them unserviceable, some noxious, some no better than a sport to children; until contemplative ability, combining with practic skill, tamed their wild nature, subdued them to use, and rendered them at once the most powerful and the most tractable agents, in subservience to the great views and designs of men. Did fifty thousand persons, whose mental and whose bodily labor you might direct, and so many hundred thousand a year of a revenue, which was neither lazy nor superstitious, appear too big for your abilities to wield? Had you no way of using the men but by converting monks into pensioners? Had you no way of turning the revenue to account, but through the improvident resource of a spendthrift sale? If you were thus destitute of mental funds, the proceeding is in its natural course. Your politicians do not understand their trade; and therefore they sell their tools.

But the institutions savor of superstition in their very

principle; and they nourish it by a permanent and standing influence. This I do not mean to dispute; but this ought not to hinder you from deriving from superstition itself any resources which may thence be furnished for the public advantage. You derive benefits from many dispositions and many passions of the human mind, which are of as doubtful a color in the moral eye, as superstition itself. It was your business to correct and mitigate every thing which was noxious in this passion, as in all the passions. But is superstition the greatest of all possible vices? In its possible excess I think it becomes a very great evil. It is, however, a moral subject; and of course admits of all degrees and all modifications. Superstition is the religion of feeble minds; and they must be tolerated in an intermixture of it, in some trifling or some enthusiastic shape or other, else you will deprive weak minds of a resource found necessary to the strongest. The body of all true religion consists, to be sure, in obedience to the will of the sovereign of the world; in a confidence in his declarations; and in imitation of his perfections. The rest is our own. It may be prejudicial to the great end; it may be auxiliary. Wise men, who as such, are not *admirers* (not admirers at least of the *Munera Terræ*) are not violently attached to these things, nor do they violently hate them. Wisdom is not the most severe corrector of folly. They are the rival follies, which mutually wage so unrelenting a war; and which make so cruel a use of their advantages, as they can happen to engage the immoderate vulgar on the one side or the other in their quarrels. Prudence would be neuter; but if, in the contention between fond attachment and fierce antipathy concerning things in their nature not made to produce such heats, a prudent man were obliged to make a choice of what errors and excesses of enthusiasm he would condemn or bear, perhaps he would think the superstition which builds, to be more tolerable than that which demolishes—that which adorns a country, than that which deforms it—that which endows, than that which plunders—that which disposes to mistaken beneficence, than that which stimulates to real in-

justice—that which leads a man to refuse to himself lawful pleasures, than that which snatches from others the scanty subsistence of their self-denial. Such, I think, is very nearly the state of the question between the ancient founders of monkish superstition, and the superstition of the pretended philosophers of the hour.

For the present I postpone all consideration of the supposed public profit of the sale, which however I conceive to be perfectly delusive. I shall here only consider it as a transfer of property. On the policy of that transfer I shall trouble you with a few thoughts.

In every prosperous community something more is produced than goes to the immediate support of the producer. This surplus forms the income of the landed capitalist. It will be spent by a proprietor who does not labor. But this idleness is itself the spring of labor; this repose the spur to industry. The only concern for the state is, that the capital taken in rent from the land, should be returned again to the industry from whence it came; and that its expenditure should be with the least possible detriment to the morals of those who expend it, and to those of the people to whom it is returned.

In all the views of receipt, expenditure, and personal employment, a sober legislator would carefully compare the possessor whom he was recommended to expel, with the stranger who was proposed to fill his place. Before the inconveniences are incurred which *must* attend all violent revolutions in property through extensive confiscation, we ought to have some rational assurance that the purchasers of the confiscated property will be in a considerable degree more laborious, more virtuous, more sober, less disposed to extort an unreasonable proportion of the gains of the laborer; or to consume on themselves a larger share than is fit for the measure of an individual, or that they should be qualified to dispense the surplus in a more steady and equal mode, so as to answer the purposes of a politic expenditure, than the old possessors, call those possessors, bishops, or canons, or com-

mendatory abbots, or monks, or what you please. The monks are lazy. Be it so. Suppose them no otherwise employed than by singing in the choir. They are as usefully employed as those who neither sing nor say. As usefully even as those who sing upon the stage. They are as usefully employed as if they worked from dawn to dark in the innumerable servile, degrading, unseemly, unmanly, and often most unwholesome and pestiferous occupations, to which by the social economy so many wretches are inevitably doomed. If it were not generally pernicious to disturb the natural course of things, and to impede, in any degree, the great wheel of circulation which is turned by the strangely-directed labor of these unhappy people, I should be infinitely more inclined forcibly to rescue them from their miserable industry, than violently to disturb the tranquil repose of monastic quietude. Humanity, and perhaps policy, might better justify me in the one than in the other. It is a subject on which I have often reflected, and never reflected without feeling from it. I am sure that no consideration, except the necessity of submitting to the yoke of luxury, and the despotism of fancy, who in their own imperious way will distribute the surplus product of the soil, can justify the toleration of such trades and employments in a well-regulated state. But for this purpose of distribution, it seems to me, that the idle expenses of monks are quite as well directed as the idle expenses of us-lay loiterers.

When the advantages of the possession, and of the project are on a par, there is no motive for a change. But in the present case, perhaps they are not upon a par, and the difference is in favor of the possession. It does not appear to me, that the expenses of those whom you are going to expel, do, in fact, take a course so directly and so generally leading to vitiate and degrade and render miserable those through whom they pass, as the expenses of those favorites whom you are intruding into their houses. Why should the expenditure of a great landed property, which is a dispersion of the surplus product of the soil, appear intolerable to you or to me, when it takes its course through the accumula-

tion of vast libraries, which are the history of the force and weakness of the human mind; through great collections of ancient records, medals, and coins, which attest and explain laws and customs; through paintings and statues, that, by imitating nature, seem to extend the limits of creation; through grand monuments of the dead, which continue the regards and connections of life beyond the grave; through collections of the specimens of nature, which become a representative assembly of all the classes and families of the world, that by disposition facilitate, and, by exciting curiosity, open the avenues to science? If, by great permanent establishments, all these objects of expense are better secured from the inconstant sport of personal caprice and personal extravagance, are they worse than if the same tastes prevailed in scattered individuals? Does not the sweat of the mason and carpenter, who toil in order to partake the sweat of the peasant, flow as pleasantly and as salubriously, in the construction and repair of the majestic edifices of religion, as in the painted booths and sordid sties of vice and luxury; as honorably and as profitably in repairing those sacred works, which grow hoary with innumerable years, as on the momentary receptacles of transient voluptuousness; in opera-houses, and brothels, and gaming-houses, and club-houses, and obelisks in the Champ de Mars? Is the surplus product of the olive and the vine worse employed in the frugal sustenance of persons, whom the fictions of a pious imagination raise to dignity by construing in the service of God, than in pampering the innumerable multitude of those who are degraded by being made useless domestics, subservient to the pride of man? Are the decorations of temples an expenditure less worthy a wise man than ribbons, and laces, and national cockades, and petit maisons, and petit soupers, and all the innumerable fopperies and follies in which opulence sports away the burthen of its superfluity?

We tolerate even these; not from love of them, but for fear of worse. We tolerate them, because property and liberty, to a degree, require that toleration. But why proscribe the other, and surely, in every point of view, the more laudable use of

estates? Why, through the violation of all property, through an outrage upon every principle of liberty, forcibly carry them from the better to the worse?

This comparison between the new individuals and the old corps, is made upon a supposition that no reform could be made in the latter. But in a question of reformation, I always consider corporate bodies, whether sole or consisting of many, to be much more susceptible of a public direction by the power of the state, in the use of their property, and in the regulation of modes and habits of life in their members than private citizens ever can be, or perhaps ought to be; and this seems to me a very material consideration for those who undertake any thing which merits the name of a politic enterprise. So far as to the estates of monasteries.

With regard to the estates possessed by bishops and canons, and commendary abbots, I cannot find out for what reason some landed estates may not be held otherwise than by inheritance. Can any philosophic spoiler undertake to demonstrate the positive or the comparative evil, of having a certain, and that too a large portion of landed property, passing in succession through persons whose title to it is, always in theory, and often in fact, an eminent degree of piety, morals, and learning; a property, which, by its destination, in their turn, and on the score of merit, gives to the noblest families renovation and support, to the lowest the means of dignity and elevation; a property, the tenure to which is the performance of some duty, (whatever value you may choose to set upon that duty) and the character of whose proprietors demands at least an exterior decorum and gravity of manners; who are to exercise a generous but temperate hospitality; part of whose income they are to consider as a trust for charity; and who, even when they fail in their trust, when they slide from their character, and degenerate into a mere common secular nobleman or gentleman, are in no respect worse than those who may succeed them in their forfeited possessions? Is it better that estates should be held by those who have no duty than by those who have one?—by those whose character and destina-

tion point to virtues, than by those who have no rule and direction in the expenditure of their estates but their own will and appetite? Nor are these estates held altogether in the character or with the evils supposed inherent in mortmain. They pass from hand to hand with a more rapid circulation than any other. No excess is good; and therefore too great a proportion of landed property may be held officially for life; but it does not seem to me of material injury to any commonwealth, that there should exist some estates that have a chance of being acquired by other means than the previous acquisition of money.

This letter is grown to a great length, though it is indeed short with regard to the infinite extent of the subject. Various avocations have from time to time called my mind from the subject. I was not sorry to give myself leisure to observe whether, in the proceedings of the national assembly, I might not find reasons to change or to qualify some of my first sentiments. Every thing has confirmed me more strongly in my first opinions. It was my original purpose to take a view of the principles of the national assembly with regard to the great and fundamental establishments; and to compare the whole of what you have substituted in the place of what you have destroyed, with the several members of our British constitution. But this plan is of greater extent than at first I computed, and I find that you have little desire to take the advantage of any examples. At present I must content myself with some remarks upon your establishments; reserving for another time what I proposed to say concerning the spirit of our British monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, as practically they exist.

I have taken a view of what has been done by the governing power in France. I have certainly spoke of it with freedom. Those whose principle it is to despise the ancient permanent sense of mankind, and to set up a scheme of society on new principles, must naturally expect that such of us who think better of the judgment of the human race than of theirs, should consider both them and their devices, as men

and schemes upon their trial. They must take it for granted that we attend much to their reason, but not at all to their authority. They have not one of the great influencing prejudices of mankind in their favor. They avow their hostility to opinion. Of course they must expect no support from that influence, which, with every other authority, they have deposed from the seat of its jurisdiction.

I can never consider this assembly as any thing else than a voluntary association of men, who have availed themselves of circumstances, to seize upon the power of the state. They have not the sanction and authority of the character under which they first met. They have assumed another of a very different nature; and have completely altered and inverted all the relations in which they originally stood. They do not hold the authority they exercise under any constitutional law of the state. They have departed from the instructions of the people by whom they were sent; which instructions, as the assembly did not act in virtue of any ancient usage or settled law, were the sole source of their authority. The most considerable of their acts have not been done by great majorities; and in this sort of near divisions, which carry only the constructive authority of the whole, strangers will consider reasons as well as resolutions.

If they had set up this new experimental government, as a necessary substitute for an expelled tyranny, mankind would anticipate the time of prescription, which, through long usage, mellows into legality governments that were violent in their commencement. All those who have affections which lead them to the conservation of civil order would recognise, even in its cradle, the child as legitimate, which has been produced from those principles of cogent expediency to which all just governments owe their birth, and on which they justify their continuance. But they will be late and reluctant in giving any sort of countenance to the operations of a power, which has derived its birth from no law and no necessity; but which on the contrary has had its origin in those vices and sinister practices by

which the social union is often disturbed and sometimes destroyed. This assembly has hardly a year's prescription. We have their own word for it that they have made a revolution. To make a revolution is a measure which, *prima fronte*, requires an apology. To make a revolution is to subvert the ancient state of our country; and no common reasons are called for to justify so violent a proceeding. The sense of mankind authorizes us to examine into the mode of acquiring new power, and to criticise on the use that is made of it with less awe and reverence than that which is usually conceded to a settled and recognised authority.

In obtaining and securing their power, the assembly proceeds upon principles the most opposite from those which appear to direct them in the use of it. An observation on this difference will let us into the true spirit of their conduct. Every thing which they have done, or continue to do, in order to obtain and keep their power, is by the most common arts. They proceed exactly as their ancestors of ambition have done before them.—Trace them through all their artifices, frauds, and violences, you can find nothing at all that is new. They follow precedents and examples with the punctilious exactness of a pleader. They never depart an iota from the authentic formulas of tyranny and usurpation. But in all the regulations relative to the public good, the spirit has been the very reverse of this. There they commit the whole to the mercy of untried speculations; they abandon the dearest interests of the public to those loose theories, to which none of them would choose to trust the slightest of his private concerns. They make this difference, because in their desire of obtaining and securing power they are thoroughly in earnest; there they travel in the beaten road. The public interests, because about them they have no real solicitude, they abandon wholly to chance; I say to chance, because their schemes have nothing in experience to prove their tendency beneficial.

We must always see with a pity not unmixed with respect, the errors of those who are timid and doubtful of themselves with regard to points wherein the happiness of mankind is

concerned. But in these gentlemen there is nothing of the tender parental solicitude which fears to cut up the infant for the sake of an experiment. In the vastness of their promises, and the confidence of their predictions they far outdo all the boasting of empirics. The arrogance of their pretensions, in a manner provokes, and challenges us to an inquiry into their foundation.

I am convinced that there are men of considerable parts among the popular leaders in the national assembly. Some of them display eloquence in their speeches and their writings. This cannot be without powerful and cultivated talents. But eloquence may exist without a proportionable degree of wisdom. When I speak of ability, I am obliged to distinguish. What they have done towards the support of their system bespeaks no ordinary men. In the system itself, taken as the scheme of a republic constructed for procuring the prosperity and security of the citizen, and for promoting the strength and grandeur of the state, I confess myself unable to find out any thing which displays, in a single instance, the work of a comprehensive and disposing mind, or even the provisions of a vulgar prudence. Their purpose every where seems to have been to evade and slip aside from *difficulty*. This it has been the glory of the great masters in all the arts to confront, and to overcome; and when they had overcome the first difficulty, to turn it into an instrument for new conquests over new difficulties; thus to enable them to extend the empire of their science; and even to push forward beyond the reach of their original thoughts, the landmarks of the human understanding itself. Difficulty is a severe instructer, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better too. *Pater ipse colendi haud facilem esse viam voluit.* He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper. This amicable conflict with difficulty obliges us to an intimate acquaintance with our object, and compels us to consider it in all its relations. It will not suffer us to be superficial. It is the want of nerves

of understanding for such a task; it is the degenerate fondness for tricking short-cuts, and little fallacious facilities, that has in so many parts of the world created governments with arbitrary powers. They have created the late arbitrary monarchy of France. They have created the arbitrary republic of Paris. With them defects in wisdom are to be supplied by the plenitude of force. They get nothing by it. Commencing their labors on a principle of sloth, they have the common fortune of slothful men. The difficulties which they rather had eluded than escaped, meet them again in their course; they multiply and thicken on them; they are involved, through a labyrinth of confused detail, in an industry without limit, and without direction; and, in conclusion, the whole of their work becomes feeble, vicious, and insecure.

It is this inability to wrestle with difficulty which has obliged the arbitrary assembly of France to commence their schemes of reform with abolition and total destruction.* But is it in destroying and pulling down that skill is displayed? Your mob can do this as well at least as your assemblies. The shallowest understanding, the rudest hand is more than equal to that task. Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in an hundred years. The errors and defects of old establishments are visible and palpable. It calls for little ability to point them out; and where absolute power is given, it requires but a word wholly to abolish the vice and the establishment together. The same lazy but restless dispo-

* A leading member of the assembly, M. Rabaud de St. Etienne, has expressed the principle of all their proceedings as clearly as possible.—Nothing can be more simple :—"*Tous les établissemens en France couronnent le malheur du peuple: pour le rendre heureux il faut le rénouveler; changer ses idées; changer ses loix; changer ses mœurs; . . . . . changer les hommes; changer les choses; changer les mots . . . . . tout détruire; oui, tout détruire; puisque tout est à recréer.*" This gentleman was chosen president in an assembly not sitting at *Quinze-vingt*, or the *Petits Maisons;* and composed of persons giving themselves out to be rational beings; but neither his ideas, language, or conduct, differ in the smallest degree from the discourses, opinions, and actions of those within and without the assembly, who direct the operations of the machine now at work in France.

sition which loves sloth and hates quiet, directs these politicians, when they come to work, for supplying the place of what they have destroyed. To make every thing the reverse of what they have seen is quite as easy as to destroy. No difficulties occur in what has never been tried. Criticism is almost baffled in discovering the defects of what has not existed; and eager enthusiasm, and cheating hope have all the wide field of imagination, in which they may expatiate with little or no opposition.

At once to preserve and to reform is quite another thing. When the useful parts of an old establishment are kept, and what is superadded is to be fitted to what is retained, a vigorous mind, steady persevering attention, various powers of comparison and combination, and the resources of an understanding fruitful in expedients, are to be exercised; they are to be exercised in a continued conflict with the combined force of opposite vices; with the obstinacy that rejects all improvement, and the levity that is fatigued and disgusted with every thing of which it is in possession. But you may object—"A process of this kind is slow. It is not fit for an assembly, which glories in performing in a few months the work of ages. Such a mode of reforming, possibly might take up many years." Without question it might; and it ought. It is one of the excellences of a method in which time is amongst the assistants, that its operation is slow, and in some cases almost imperceptible. If circumspection and caution are a part of wisdom, when we work only upon inanimate matter, surely they become a part of duty too, when the subject of our demolition and construction is not brick and timber, but sentient beings, by the sudden alteration of whose state, condition, and habits, multitudes may be rendered miserable. But it seems as if it were the prevalent opinion in Paris, that an unfeeling heart, and an undoubting confidence, are the sole qualifications for a perfect legislator. Far different are my ideas of that high office. The true lawgiver ought to have a heart full of sensibility. He ought to love and respect his kind, and to fear himself. It may be allowed to his

temperament to catch his ultimate object with an intuitive glance; but his movements towards it ought to be deliberate. Political arrangement, as it is a work for social ends, is to be only wrought by social means. There mind must conspire with mind. Time is required to produce that union of minds which alone can produce all the good we aim at. Our patience will achieve more than our force. If I might venture to appeal to what is so much out of fashion in Paris, I mean to experience, I should tell you, that in my course I have known, and, according to my measure, have coöperated with great men; and I have never yet seen any plan which has not been mended by the observations of those who were much inferior in understanding to the person who took the lead in the business. By a slow but well sustained progress, the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill-success of the first, gives light to us in the second; and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series. We see that the parts of the system do not clash. The evils latent in the most promising contrivances are provided for as they arise. One advantage is as little as possible sacrificed to another. We compensate, we reconcile, we balance. We are enabled to unite into a consistent whole the various anomalies and contending principles that are found in the minds and affairs of men. From hence arises, not an excellence in simplicity, but one far superior, an excellence in composition. Where the great interests of mankind are concerned through a long succession of generations, that succession ought to be admitted into some share in the councils which are so deeply to affect them. If justice requires this, the work itself requires the aid of more minds than one age can furnish. It is from this view of things that the best legislators have been often satisfied with the establishment of some sure, solid, and ruling principle in government; a power like that which some of the philosophers have called a plastic nature; and having fixed the principle, they have left it afterwards to its own operation.

To proceed in this manner, that is, to proceed with a presiding principle, and a prolific energy, is with me the criterion

of profound wisdom. What your politicians think the marks of a bold, hardy genius, are only proofs of a deplorable want of ability. By their violent haste, and their defiance of the process of nature, they are delivered over blindly to every projector and adventurer, to every alchymist and empiric. They despair of turning to account any thing that is common. Diet is nothing in their system of remedy. The worst of it is, that this their despair of curing common distempers by regular methods, arises not only from defect of comprehension, but, I fear, from some malignity of disposition. Your legislators seem to have taken their opinions of all professions, ranks, and offices, from the declamations and buffooneries of satirists; who would themselves be astonished if they were held to the letter of their own descriptions. By listening only to these, your leaders regard all things only on the side of their vices and faults, and view those vices and faults under every color of exaggeration. It is undoubtedly true, though it may seem paradoxical; but in general, those who are habitually employed in finding and displaying faults, are unqualified for the work of reformation: because their minds are not only unfurnished with patterns of the fair and good, but by habit they come to take no delight in the contemplation of those things. By hating vices too much, they come to love men too little. It is therefore not wonderful, that they should be indisposed and unable to serve them. From hence arises the complexional disposition of some of your guides to pull every thing in pieces. At this malicious game they display the whole of their *quadrimanous* activity. As to the rest, the paradoxes of eloquent writers, brought forth purely as a sport of fancy, to try their talents, to rouse attention, and excite surprise, are taken up by these gentlemen, not in the spirit of the original authors, as means of cultivating their taste and improving their style. These paradoxes become with them serious grounds of action, upon which they proceed in regulating the most important concerns of the state. Cicero ludicrously describes Cato as endeavoring to act in the commonwealth upon the school paradoxes which exercised the wits of the junior students in the

stoic philosophy. If this was true of Cato, these gentlemen copy after him in the manner of some persons who lived about his time—*pede nudo Catonem*. Mr. Hume told me, that he had from Rousseau himself the secret of his principles of composition. That acute, though eccentric observer, had perceived, that to strike and interest the public, the marvelous must be produced; that the marvelous of the heathen mythology had long since lost its effect; that giants, magicians, fairies, and heroes of romance which succeeded, had exhausted the portion of credulity which belonged to their age; that now nothing was left to a writer but that species of the marvelous, which might still be produced, and with as great an effect as ever, though in another way; that is, the marvelous in life, in manners, in characters, and in extraordinary situations, giving rise to new and unlooked-for strokes in politics and morals. I believe, that were Rousseau alive, and in one of his lucid intervals, he would be shocked at the practical frenzy of his scholars, who in their paradoxes are servile imitators; and even in their incredulity discover an implicit faith.

Men who undertake considerable things, even in a regular way, ought to give us ground to presume ability. But the physician of the state, who, not satisfied with the cure of distempers, undertakes to regenerate constitutions, ought to shew uncommon powers. Some very unusual appearances of wisdom ought to display themselves on the face of the designs of those who appeal to no practice, and who copy after no model. Has any such been manifested? I shall take a view (it shall for the subject be a very short one) of what the assembly has done, with regard, first, to the constitution of the legislature; in the next place, to that of the executive power; then to that of the judicature; afterwards to the model of the army; and conclude with the system of finance, to see whether we can discover in any part of their schemes the portentous ability, which may justify these bold undertakers in the superiority which they assume over mankind.

It is in the model of the sovereign and presiding part of this new republic, that we should expect their grand display.

Here they were to prove their title to their proud demands. For the plan itself at large, and for the reasons on which it is grounded, I refer to the journals of the assembly of the 29th of September, 1789, and to the subsequent proceedings which have made any alterations in the plan. So far as in a matter somewhat confused I can see light, the system remains substantially as it has been originally framed. My few remarks will be such as regard its spirit, its tendency, and its fitness for framing a popular commonwealth, which they profess theirs to be, suited to the ends for which any commonwealth, and particularly such a commonwealth, is made. At the same time I mean to consider its consistency with itself and its own principles.

Old establishments are tried by their effects. If the people are happy, united, wealthy, and powerful, we presume the rest. We conclude that to be good from whence good is derived. In old establishments various correctives have been found for their aberrations from theory. Indeed they are the results of various necessities and expediences. They are not often constructed after any theory; theories are rather drawn from them. In them we often see the end best obtained, where the means seem not perfectly reconcilable to what we may fancy was the original scheme. The means taught by experience may be better suited to political ends than those contrived in the original project. They again react upon the primitive constitution, and sometimes improve the design itself from which they seem to have departed. I think all this might be curiously exemplified in the British constitution. At worst, the errors and deviations of every kind in reckoning are found and computed, and the ship proceeds in her course. This is the case of old establishments; but in a new and merely theoretic system, it is expected that every contrivance shall appear, on the face of it, to answer its ends; especially where the projectors are no way embarrassed with an endeavor to accommodate the new building to an old one, either in the walls or on the foundations.

The French builders, clearing away as mere rubbish what-

ever they found, and, like their ornamental gardeners, forming every thing into an exact level, propose to rest the whole local and general legislature on three bases of three different kinds; one geometrical, one arithmetical, and the third financial; the first of which they call the *basis of territory;* the second, the *basis of population;* and the third, the *basis of contribution.* For the accomplishment of the first of these purposes, they divide the area of their country into eighty-three pieces, regularly square, of eighteen leagues by eighteen. These large divisions are called *Departments.* These they portion, proceeding by square measurement, into seventeen hundred and twenty districts, called *Communes.* These again they subdivide, still proceeding by square measurement, into smaller districts called *Cantons,* making in all 6,400.

At first view this geometrical basis of theirs presents not much to admire or to blame. It calls for no great legislative talents. Nothing more than an accurate land surveyor, with his chain, sight, and theodolite, is requisite for such a plan as this. In the old divisions of the country, various accidents at various times, and the ebb and flow of various properties and jurisdictions, settled their bounds. These bounds were not made upon any fixed system undoubtedly. They were subject to some inconveniences; but they were inconveniences for which use had found remedies, and habit had supplied accommodation and patience. In this new pavement of square within square, and this organization and semi-organization made on the system of Empedocles and Buffon, and not upon any politic principle, it is impossible that innumerable local inconveniences, to which men are not habituated, must not arise. But these I pass over, because it requires an accurate knowledge of the country, which I do not possess, to specify them.

When these state surveyors came to take a view of their work of measurement, they soon found, that in politics, the most fallacious of all things was geometrical demonstration. They had then recourse to another basis (or rather buttress)

to support the building, which tottered on that false foundation. It was evident, that the goodness of the soil, the number of the people, their wealth, and the largeness of their contribution, made such infinite variations between square and square as to render mensuration a ridiculous standard of power in the commonwealth, and equality in geometry the most unequal of all measures in the distribution of men. However, they could not give it up. But dividing their political and civil representation into three parts, they allotted one of those parts to the square measurement, without a single fact or calculation to ascertain whether this territorial proportion of representation was fairly assigned, and ought upon any principle really to be a third. Having however given to geometry this portion (of a third for her dower) out of compliment I suppose to that sublime science, they left the other two to be scuffled for between the other parts, population and contribution.

When they came to provide for population, they were not able to proceed quite so smoothly as they had done in the field of their geometry. Here their arithmetic came to bear upon their juridical metaphysics. Had they stuck to their metaphysic principles, the arithmetical process would be simple indeed. Men, with them, are strictly equal, and are entitled to equal rights in their own government. Each head, on this system, would have its vote, and every man would vote directly for the person who was to represent him in the legislature. "But soft—by regular degrees, not yet." This metaphysic principle, to which law, custom, usage, policy, reason, were to yield, is to yield itself to their pleasure. There must be many degrees, and some stages, before the representative can come in contact with his constituent. Indeed, as we shall soon see, these two persons are to have no sort of communion with each other. First, the voters in the *Canton*, who compose what they call *primary assemblies*, are to have a *qualification*. What! a qualification on the indefeasible rights of men? Yes; but it shall be a very small qualification. Our injustice shall be very little oppressive;

only the local valuation of three days labor paid to the public. Why, this is not much, I readily admit, for any thing but the utter subversion of your equalizing principle. As a qualification it might as well be let alone; for it answers no one purpose for which qualifications are established: and, on your ideas, it excludes from a vote, the man of all others whose natural equality stands the most in need of protection and defence; I mean the man who has nothing else but his natural equality to guard him. You order him to buy the right, which you before told him nature had given to him gratuitously at his birth, and of which no authority on earth could lawfully deprive him. With regard to the person who cannot come up to your market, a tyrannous aristocracy, as against him, is established at the very outset, by you who pretend to be its sworn foe.

The gradation proceeds. These primary assemblies of the *Canton* elect deputies to the *Commune;* one for every two hundred qualified inhabitants. Here is the first medium put between the primary elector and the representative legislator; and here a new turnpike is fixed for taxing the rights of men with a second qualification: for none can be elected into the *Commune* who does not pay the amount of ten days labor. Nor have we yet done. There is still to be another gradation.* These *Communes*, chosen by the *Canton*, choose to the *Department;* and the deputies of the *Department* choose their deputies to the *National Assembly*. Here is a third barrier of a senseless qualification. Every deputy to the National Assembly must pay, in direct contribution, to the value of a *mark of silver*. Of all these qualifying barriers

* The assembly, in executing the plan of their committee, made some alterations. They have struck out one stage in these gradations; this removes a part of the objection: but the main objection, namely, that in their scheme the first constituent voter has no connection with the representative legislator, remains in all its force. There are other alterations, some possibly for the better, some certainly for the worse: but to the author the merit or demerit of these smaller alterations appears to be of no moment, where the scheme itself is fundamentally vicious and absurd.

we must think alike; that they are impotent to secure independence; strong only to destroy the rights of men.

In all this process, which in its fundamental elements affects to consider only *population* upon a principle of natural right, there is a manifest attention to *property;* which, however just and reasonable on other schemes, is on theirs perfectly unsupportable.

When they come to their third basis, that of *Contribution*, we find that they have more completely lost sight of the rights of men. This last basis rests *entirely* on property. A principle totally different from the equality of men, and utterly irreconcilable to it, is thereby admitted; but no sooner is this principle admitted, than (as usual) it is subverted; and it is not subverted (as we shall presently see) to approximate the inequality of riches to the level of nature. The additional share in the third portion of representation (a portion reserved exclusively for the higher contribution) is made to regard the *district* only, and not the individuals in it who pay. It is easy to perceive, by the course of their reasonings, how much they were embarrassed by their contradictory ideas of the rights of men and the privileges of riches. The committee of constitution do as good as admit that they are wholly irreconcilable. "The relation with regard to the contributions, is without doubt *null* (say they) when the question is on the balance of the political rights as between individual and individual; without which *personal equality would be destroyed*, and *an aristocracy of the rich* would be established. But this inconvenience entirely disappears when the proportional relation of the contribution is only considered in the *great masses*, and is solely between province and province; it serves in that case only to form a just reciprocal proportion between the cities, without affecting the personal rights of the citizens."

Here the principle of *contribution*, as taken between man and man, is reprobated as *null*, and destructive to equality; and as pernicious too; because it leads to the establishment of an *aristocracy of the rich*. However, it must not be

abandoned. And the way of getting rid of the difficulty is to establish the inequality as between department and department, leaving all the individuals in each department upon an exact par. Observe, that this parity between individuals had been before destroyed when the qualifications within the departments were settled; nor does it seem a matter of great importance whether the equality of men be injured by masses or individually. An individual is not of the same importance in a mass represented by a few, as in a mass represented by many. It would be too much to tell a man jealous of his equality, that the elector has the same franchise who votes for three members as he who votes for ten.

Now take it in the other point of view, and let us suppose their principle of representation according to contribution, that is according to riches, to be well imagined, and to be a necessary basis for their republic. In this their third basis they assume, that riches ought to be respected, and that justice and policy require that they should entitle men, in some mode or other, to a larger share in the administration of public affairs; it is now to be seen how the assembly provides for the preëminence, or even for the security of the rich, by conferring, in virtue of their opulence, that larger measure of power to their district which is denied to them personally. I readily admit (indeed I should lay it down as a fundamental principle) that in a republican government, which has a democratic basis, the rich do require an additional security above what is necessary to them in monarchies. They are subject to envy, and through envy to oppression. On the present scheme it is impossible to divine what advantage they derive from the aristocratic preference upon which the unequal representation of the masses is founded. The rich cannot feel it, either as a support to dignity, or as security to fortune: for the aristocratic mass is generated from purely democratic principles; and the preference given to it in the general representation has no sort of reference to, or connection with, the persons, upon account of whose property

this superiority of the mass is established. If the contrivers of this scheme meant any sort of favor to the rich, in consequence of their contribution, they ought to have conferred the privilege either on the individual rich, or on some class formed of rich persons (as historians represent Servius Tullius to have done in the early constitution of Rome); because the contest between the rich and the poor is not a struggle between corporation and corporation, but a contest between men and men; a competition not between districts, but between descriptions. It would answer its purpose better if the scheme were inverted; that the votes of the masses were rendered equal; and that the votes within each mass were proportioned to property.

Let us suppose one man in a district (it is an easy supposition) to contribute as much as an hundred of his neighbors. Against these he has but one vote. If there were but one representative for the mass, his poor neighbors would outvote him by an hundred to one for that single representative. Bad enough. But amends are to be made him. How? The district, in virtue of his wealth, is to choose, say ten members instead of one: that is to say, by paying a very large contribution he has the happiness of being outvoted, an hundred to one, by the poor, for ten representatives, instead of being outvoted exactly in the same proportion for a single member. In truth, instead of benefiting by this superior quantity of representation, the rich man is subjected to an additional hardship. The increase of representation within the province sets up nine persons more, and as many more than nine as there may be democratic candidates, to cabal and intrigue, and to flatter the people at his expense and to his oppression. An interest is by this means held out to multitudes of the inferior sort, in obtaining a salary of eighteen livres a day, (to them a vast object) besides the pleasure of a residence in Paris, and their share in the government of the kingdom. The more the objects of ambition are multiplied and become democratic, just in that proportion the rich are endangered.

Thus it must fare between the poor and the rich in the province deemed aristocratic, which in its internal relation is the very reverse of that character. In its external relation, that is, in its relation to the other provinces, I cannot see how the unequal representation, which is given to masses on account of wealth, becomes the means of preserving the equipoise and the tranquillity of the commonwealth. For if it be one of the objects to secure the weak from being crushed by the strong (as in all society undoubtedly it is) how are the smaller and poorer of these masses to be saved from the tyranny of the more wealthy? Is it by adding to the wealthy further and more systematical means of oppressing them? When we come to a balance of representation between corporate bodies, provincial interests, emulations, and jealousies, are full as likely to arise among them as among individuals; and their divisions are likely to produce a much hotter spirit of dissension, and something leading much more nearly to a war.

I see that these aristocratic masses are made upon what is called the principle of direct contribution. Nothing can be a more unequal standard than this. The indirect contribution, that which arises from duties on consumption, is in truth a better standard, and follows and discovers wealth more naturally than this of direct contribution. It is difficult indeed to fix a standard of local preference on account of the one, or of the other, or of both, because some provinces may pay the more of either or of both, on account of causes not intrinsic, but originating from those very districts over whom they have obtained a preference in consequence of their ostensible contribution. If the masses were independent sovereign bodies, who were to provide for a federative treasury by distinct contingents, and that the revenue had not (as it has) many impositions running through the whole, which affect men individually, and not corporately, and which, by their nature, confound all territorial limits, something might be said for the basis of contribution as founded on masses. But of all things, this representation, to be measured by contribution, is

the most difficult to settle upon principles of equity, in a country, which considers its districts as members of a whole. For a great city, such as Bourdeaux or Paris, appears to pay a vast body of duties, almost out of all assignable proportion to other places, and its mass is considered accordingly. But are these cities the true contributors in that proportion? No. The consumers of the commodities imported into Bourdeaux, who are scattered through all France, pay the import duties of Bourdeaux. The produce of the vintage in Guienne and Languedoc give to that city the means of its contribution growing out of an export commerce. The landholders who spend their estates in Paris, and are thereby the creators of that city, contribute for Paris from the provinces out of which their revenues arise. Very nearly the same arguments will apply to the representative share given on account of *direct* contribution: because the direct contribution must be assessed on wealth real or presumed; and that local wealth will itself arise from causes not local, and which therefore in equity ought not to produce a local preference.

It is very remarkable, that in this fundamental regulation, which settles the representation of the mass upon the direct contribution, they have not yet settled how that direct contribution shall be laid, and how apportioned. Perhaps there is some latent policy towards the continuance of the present assembly in this strange procedure. However, until they do this, they can have no certain constitution. It must depend at last upon the system of taxation, and must vary with every variation in that system. As they have contrived matters, their taxation does not so much depend on their constitution, as their constitution on their taxation. This must introduce great confusion among the masses; as the variable qualification for votes within the district, must, if ever real contested elections take place, cause infinite internal controversies.

To compare together the three bases, not on their political reason, but on the ideas on which the assembly works, and to try its consistency with itself, we cannot avoid observing,

that the principle which the committee call the basis of *population*, does not begin to operate from the same point with the two other principles called the bases of *territory* and of *contribution*, which are both of an aristocratic nature. The consequence is, that where all three begin to operate together, there is the most absurd inequality produced by the operation of the former on the two latter principles. Every canton contains four square leagues, and is estimated to contain, on the average, 4,000 inhabitants, or 680 voters in the *primary assemblies*, which vary in numbers with the population of the canton, and send *one deputy* to the *commune* for every 200 voters. *Nine cantons* make a *commune*.

Now let us take *a canton* containing *a sea-port town of trade*, or *a great manufacturing town*. Let us suppose the population of this canton to be 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters, forming *three primary assemblies*, and sending *ten deputies* to the *commune*.

Oppose to this *one* canton *two* others of the remaining eight in the same commune. These we may suppose to have their fair population of 4,000 inhabitants, and 680 voters each, or 8,000 inhabitants and 1,360 voters, both together. These will form only *two primary assemblies*, and send only *six* deputies to the *commune*.

When the assembly of the *commune* comes to vote on the *basis of territory*, which principle is first admitted to operate in that assembly, the *single canton* which has *half* the territory of the *other two*, will have *ten* voices to *six* in the election of *three deputies* to the assembly of the department, chosen on the express ground of a representation of territory. This inequality, striking as it is, will be yet highly aggravated, if we suppose, as we fairly may, the *several* other cantons of the *commune* to fall proportionably short of the average population, as much as the *principal canton* exceeds it.

Now as to *the basis of contribution*, which also is a principle admitted first to operate in the assembly of the *commune*. Let us again take *one* canton, such as is stated above. If the

whole of the direct contributions paid by a great trading or manufacturing town be divided equally among the inhabitants, each individual will be found to pay much more than an individual living in the country according to the same average. The whole paid by the inhabitants of the former will be more than the whole paid by the inhabitants of the latter—we may fairly assume one third more. Then the 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters of the canton will pay as much as 19,050 inhabitants, or 3,289 voters of the *other cantons*, which are nearly the estimated proportion of inhabitants and voters of *five* other cantons. Now the 2,193 voters will, as I before said, send only *ten* deputies to the assembly; the 3,289 voters will send *sixteen*. Thus, for an *equal* share in the contribution of the whole *commune*, there will be a difference of *sixteen* voices to *ten* in voting for deputies to be chosen on the principle of representing the general contribution of the whole *commune*.

By the same mode of computation we shall find 15,875 inhabitants, or 2,741 voters of the *other* cantons, who pay *one sixth* LESS to the contribution of the whole *commune*, will have *three* voices MORE than the 12,700 inhabitants, or 2,193 voters of the *one* canton.

Such is the fantastical and unjust inequality between mass and mass, in this curious repartition of the rights of representation arising out of *territory* and *contribution*. The qualifications which these confer are in truth negative qualifications, that give a right in an inverse proportion to the possession of them.

In this whole contrivance of the three bases, consider it in any light you please, I do not see a variety of objects, reconciled in one consistent whole, but several contradictory principles reluctantly and irreconcilably brought and held together by your philosophers, like wild beasts shut up in a cage, to claw and bite each other to their mutual destruction.

I am afraid I have gone too far into their way of considering the formation of a constitution. They have much, but bad, metaphysics; much, but bad, geometry; much, but

false, proportionate arithmetic; but if it were all as exact as metaphysics, geometry, and arithmetic ought to be, and if their schemes were perfectly consistent in all their parts, it would make only a more fair and sightly vision. It is remarkable, that in a great arrangement of mankind, not one reference whatsoever is to be found to any thing moral or any thing politic; nothing that relates to the concerns, the actions, the passions, the interests of men. *Hominem non sapiunt.*

You see I only consider this constitution as electoral, and leading by steps to the national assembly. I do not enter into the internal government of the departments, and their genealogy through the communes and cantons. These local governments are, in the original plan, to be as nearly as possible composed in the same manner and on the same principles with the elective assemblies. They are each of them bodies perfectly compact and rounded in themselves. You cannot but perceive in this scheme, that it has a direct and immediate tendency to sever France into a variety of republics, and to render them totally independent of each other, without any direct constitutional means of coherence, connection, or subordination, except what may be derived from their acquiescence in the determinations of the general congress of the ambassadors from each independent republic. Such in reality is the national assembly, and such governments I admit do exist in the world, though in forms infinitely more suitable to the local and habitual circumstances of their people. But such associations, rather than bodies politic, have generally been the effect of necessity, not choice; and I believe the present French power is the very first body of citizens, who, having obtained full authority to do with their country what they pleased, have chosen to dissever it in this barbarous manner.

It is impossible not to observe, that in the spirit of this geometrical distribution, and arithmetical arrangement, these pretended citizens treat France exactly like a country of conquest. Acting as conquerors, they have imitated the policy

of the harshest of that harsh race. The policy of such barbarous victors, who contemn a subdued people, and insult their feelings, has ever been, as much as in them lay, to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country, in religion, in polity, in laws and in manners; to confound all territorial limits; to produce a general poverty; to put up their properties to auction; to crush their princes, nobles, and pontiffs; to lay low every thing which had lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people, under the standard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which those sincere friends to the rights of mankind, the Romans, freed Greece, Macedon, and other nations. They destroyed the bonds of their union, under color of providing for the independence of each of their cities.

When the members who compose these new bodies of cantons, communes, and departments, arrangements purposely produced through the medium of confusion, begin to act, they will find themselves, in a great measure, strangers to one another. The electors and elected throughout, especially in the rural *cantons*, will be frequently without any civil habitudes or connections, or any of that natural discipline which is the soul of a true republic. Magistrates and collectors of revenue are now no longer acquainted with their districts; bishops with their dioceses, or curates with their parishes. These new colonies of the rights of men bear a strong resemblance to that sort of military colonies which Tacitus has observed upon in the declining policy of Rome. In better and wiser days (whatever course they took with foreign nations) they were careful to make the elements of a methodical subordination and settlement to be coeval; and even to lay the foundations of discipline in the military.* But, when all the good

* Non, ut olim, universæ legiones deducebantur cum tribunis, et centurionibus, et sui cujusque ordinis militibus, ut consensu et caritate rempublicam afficerent; sed ignoti inter se, diversis manipulis, sine rectore, sine affectibus mutuis, quasi ex alio genere mortalium, repente in unum collecti, numerus magis quam colonia. Tac. Annal. l. 14. sect. 27. All this will be still more applicable to the unconnected, rotatory, biennial national assemblies, in this absurd and senseless constitution.

arts had fallen into ruin, they proceeded, as your assembly does, upon the equality of men, and with as little judgment, and as little care for those things which make a republic tolerable or durable. But in this, as well as almost every instance, your new commonwealth is born, and bred, and fed, in those corruptions which mark degenerated and worn-out republics. Your child comes into the world with the symptoms of death; the *facies Hippocratica* forms the character of its physiognomy, and the prognostic of its fate.

The legislators who framed the ancient republics knew that their business was too arduous to be accomplished with no better apparatus than the metaphysics of an undergraduate, and the mathematics and arithmetic of an exciseman. They had to do with men, and they were obliged to study human nature. They had to do with citizens, and they were obliged to study the effects of those habits which are communicated by the circumstances of civil life. They were sensible that the operation of this second nature on the first produced a new combination; and thence arose many diversities amongst men, according to their birth, their education, their professions, the periods of their lives, their residence in towns or in the country, their several ways of acquiring and of fixing property, and according to the quality of the property itself, all which rendered them as it were so many different species of animals. From hence they thought themselves obliged to dispose their citizens into such classes, and to place them in such situations in the state as their peculiar habits might qualify them to fill, and to allot to them such appropriated privileges as might secure to them what their specific occasions required, and which might furnish to each description such force as might protect it in the conflict caused by the diversity of interests, that must exist, and must contend, in all complex society: for the legislator would have been ashamed, that the coarse husbandman should well know how to assort and to use his sheep, horses, and oxen, and should have enough of common sense not to abstract and equalize them all into animals, without providing for each kind an

appropriate food, care, and employment; whilst he, the economist, disposer and shepherd of his own kindred, subliming himself into an airy metaphysician, was resolved to know nothing of his flocks but as men in general. It is for this reason that Montesquieu observed very justly, that in their classification of the citizens, the great legislators of antiquity made the greatest display of their powers, and even soared above themselves. It is here that your modern legislators have gone deep into the negative series, and sunk even below their own nothing. As the first sort of legislators attended to the different kinds of citizens, and combined them into one commonwealth, the others, the metaphysical and alchemistical legislators, have taken the direct contrary course. They have attempted to confound all sorts of citizens, as well as they could, into one homogeneous mass; and then they divided this their amalgama into a number of incoherent republics. They reduce men to loose counters, merely for the sake of simple telling, and not to figures whose power is to arise from their place in the table. The elements of their own metaphysics might have taught them better lessons. The troll of their categorical table might have informed them that there was something else in the intellectual world besides *substance* and *quantity*. They might learn from the catechism of metaphysics that there were eight heads more,* in every complex deliberation, which they have never thought of, though these, of all the ten, are the subject on which the skill of man can operate any thing at all.

So far from this able disposition of some of the old republican legislators, which follows with a solicitous accuracy the moral conditions and propensities of men, they have leveled and crushed together all the orders which they found, even under the coarse unartificial arrangement of the monarchy, in which mode of government the classing of the citizens is not of so much importance as in a republic. It is true, however, that every such classification, if properly ordered, is good in

* Qualitas, Relatio, Actio, Passio, Ubi, Quando, Situs, Habitus.

all forms of government; and composes a strong barrier against the excesses of despotism, as well as it is the necessary means of giving effect and permanence to a republic. For want of something of this kind, if the present project of a republic should fail, all securities to a moderated freedom fail along with it; all the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed; insomuch that if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendency in France, under this or under any other dynasty, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out, by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that has ever appeared on earth. This is to play a most desperate game.

The confusion, which attends on all such proceedings, they even declare to be one of their objects, and they hope to secure their constitution by a terror of a return of those evils which attended their making it. "By this," say they, "its destruction will become difficult to authority, which cannot break it up without the entire disorganization of the whole state." They presume, that if this authority should ever come to the same degree of power that they have acquired, it would make a more moderate and chastised use of it, and would piously tremble entirely to disorganize the state in the savage manner that they have done. They expect, from the virtues of returning despotism, the security which is to be enjoyed by the offspring of their popular vices.

I wish, sir, that you and my readers would give an attentive perusal to the work of M. de Calonne, on this subject. It is indeed not only an eloquent but an able and instructive performance. I confine myself to what he says relative to the constitution of the new state, and to the condition of the revenue. As to the disputes of this minister with his rivals, I do not wish to pronounce upon them. As little do I mean to hazard any opinion concerning his ways and means, financial or political, for taking his country out of its present disgraceful and deplorable situation of servitude, anarchy, bankruptcy, and beggary. I cannot speculate quite so sanguinely as he

does: but he is a Frenchman, and has a closer duty relative to those objects, and better means of judging of them, than I can have. I wish that the formal avowal which he refers to, made by one of the principal leaders in the assembly, concerning the tendency of their scheme to bring France not only from a monarchy to a republic, but from a republic to a mere confederacy, may be very particularly attended to. It adds new force to my observations; and indeed M. de Calonne's work supplies my deficiencies by many new and striking arguments on most of the subjects of this letter.*

It is this resolution, to break their country into separate republics, which has driven them into the greatest number of their difficulties and contradictions. If it were not for this, all the questions of exact equality, and these balances, never to be settled, of individual rights, population, and contribution, would be wholly useless. The representation, though derived from parts, would be a duty which equally regarded the whole. Each deputy to the assembly would be the representative of France, and of all its descriptions, of the many and of the few, of the rich and of the poor, of the great districts and of the small. All these districts would themselves be subordinate to some standing authority, existing independently of them; an authority in which their representation, and every thing that belongs to it, originated, and to which it was pointed. This standing, unalterable, fundamental government would make, and it is the only thing which could make, that territory truly and properly a whole. With us, when we elect popular representatives, we send them to a council, in which each man individually is a subject, and submitted to a government complete in all its ordinary functions. With you the elective assembly is the sovereign, and the sole sovereign; all the members are therefore integral parts of this sole sovereignty. But with us it is totally different. With us the representative, separated from the other parts can have no action and no existence. The government is the point of

* See L'Etat de la France, p. 363.

reference of the several members and districts of our representation. This is the centre of our unity. This government of reference is a trustee for the *whole*, and not for the parts. So is the other branch of our public council, I mean the house of lords. With us the king and the lords are several and joint securities for the equality of each district, each province, each city. When did you hear in Great Britain of any province suffering from the inequality of its representation; what district from having no representation at all? Not only our monarchy and our peerage secure the equality on which our unity depends, but it is the spirit of the house of commons itself. The very inequality of representation, which is so foolishly complained of, is perhaps the very thing which prevents us from thinking or acting as members for districts. Cornwall elects as many members as all Scotland. But is Cornwall better taken care of than Scotland? Few trouble their heads about any of your bases, out of some giddy clubs. Most of those who wish for any change, upon any plausible grounds, desire it on different ideas.

Your new constitution is the very reverse of ours in its principle; and I am astonished how any persons could dream of holding out any thing done in it as an example for Great Britain. With you there is little, or rather, no connection between the last representative and the first constituent. The member who goes to the national assembly is not chosen by the people, nor accountable to them. There are three elections before he is chosen: two sets of magistracy intervene between him and the primary assembly, so as to render him, as I have said, an ambassador of a state, and not the representative of the people within a state. By this the whole spirit of the election is changed; nor can any corrective your constitution-mongers have devised, render him any thing else than what he is. The very attempt to do it would inevitably introduce a confusion, if possible, more horrid than the present. There is no way to make a connection between the original constituent and the representative, but by the circuitous means which may lead the candidate to apply in the first

instance to the primary electors, in order that by their authoritative instructions (and something more perhaps) these primary electors may force the two succeeding bodies of electors to make a choice agreeable to their wishes. But this would plainly subvert the whole scheme. It would be to plunge them back into that tumult and confusion of popular election, which by their interposed gradation of elections, they mean to avoid, and at length to risk the whole fortune of the state with those who have the least knowledge of it, and the least interest in it. This is a perpetual dilemma, into which they are thrown by the vicious, weak, and contradictory principles they have chosen. Unless the people break up and level this gradation, it is plain that they do not at all substantially elect to the assembly; indeed they elect as little in appearance as reality.

What is it we all seek for in an election? To answer its real purposes, you must first possess the means of knowing the fitness of your man; and then you must retain some hold upon him by personal obligation or dependence. For what end are these primary electors complimented, or rather mocked with a choice? They can never know any thing of the qualities of him that is to serve them, nor has he any obligation whatsoever to them. Of all the powers unfit to be delegated by those who have any real means of judging, that most peculiarly unfit is what relates to a *personal* choice. In case of abuse, that body of primary electors never can call the representative to an account for his conduct. He is too far removed from them in the chain of representation. If he acts improperly at the end of his two years' lease, it does not concern him for two years more. By the new French constitution, the best and the wisest representatives go equally with the worst into this *Limbus Patrum*. Their bottoms are supposed foul, and they must go into dock to be refitted. Every man who has served in an assembly is ineligible for two years after. Just as these magistrates begin to learn their trade, like chimney-sweepers, they are disqualified for exercising it. Superficial, new, petulant acquisition, and inter-

rupted, dronish, broken, ill recollection, is to be the destined character of all your future governors. Your constitution has too much of jealousy to have much of sense in it. You consider the breach of trust in the representative so principally, that you do not at all regard the question of his fitness to execute it.

This purgatory interval is not unfavorable to a faithless representative, who may be as good a canvasser as he was a bad governor. In this time he may cabal himself into a superiority over the wisest and most virtuous. As, in the end, all the members of this elective constitution are equally fugitive, and exist only for the election, they may be no longer the same persons who had chosen him, to whom he is to be responsible when he solicits for a renewal of his trust. To call all the secondary electors of the *Commune* to account, is ridiculous, impracticable, and unjust; they may themselves have been deceived in their choice, as the third set of electors, those of the *Department*, may be in theirs. In your elections responsibility cannot exist.

Finding no sort of principle of coherence with each other in the nature and constitution of the several new republics of France, I considered what cement the legislators had provided for them from any extraneous materials. Their confederations, their *spectacles*, their civic feasts, and their enthusiasm, I take no notice of; they are nothing but mere tricks; but tracing their policy through their actions, I think I can distinguish the arrangements by which they propose to hold these republics together. The first, is the *confiscation*, with the compulsory paper currency annexed to it; the second, is the supreme power of the city of Paris; the third, is the general army of the state. Of this last I shall reserve what I have to say, until I come to consider the army as a head by itself.

As to the operation of the first (the confiscation and paper currency) merely as a cement, I cannot deny that these, the one depending on the other, may for some time compose some sort of cement, if their madness and folly in the management,

and in the tempering of the parts together, does not produce a repulsion in the very outset. But allowing to the scheme some coherence and some duration, it appears to me, that if, after awhile, the confiscation should not be found sufficient to support the paper coinage, (as I am morally certain it will not) then, instead of cementing, it will add infinitely to the dissociation, distraction, and confusion of these confederate republics, both with relation to each other, and to the several parts within themselves. But if the confiscation should so far succeed as to sink the paper currency, the cement is gone with the circulation. In the mean time its binding force will be very uncertain, and it will straiten or relax with every variation in the credit of the paper.

One thing only is certain in this scheme, which is an effect seemingly collateral, but direct, I have no doubt, in the minds of those who conduct this business, that is, its effect in producing an *oligarchy* in every one of the republics. A paper circulation, not founded on any real money deposited or engaged for, amounting already to four-and-forty millions of English money, and this currency by force substituted in the place of the coin of the kingdom, becoming thereby the substance of its revenue, as well as the medium of all its commercial and civil intercourse, must put the whole of what power, authority and influence is left, in any form whatsoever it may assume, into the hands of the managers and conductors of this circulation.

In England we feel the influence of the bank; though it is only the centre of a voluntary dealing. He knows little indeed of the influence of money upon mankind, who does not see the force of the management of a monied concern, which is so much more extensive, and in its nature so much more depending on the managers than any of ours. But this is not merely a money concern. There is another member in the system inseparably connected with this money management. It consists in the means of drawing out at discretion portions of the confiscated lands for sale; and carrying on a process of continual transmutation of paper into land, and land into paper.

When we follow this process in its effects, we may conceive something of the intensity of the force with which this system must operate. By this means the spirit of money jobbing and speculation goes into the mass of the land itself, and incorporates with it. By this kind of operation, that species of property becomes (as it were) volatilized; it assumes an unnatural and monstrous activity, and thereby throws into the hands of the several managers, principal and subordinate, Parisian and provincial, all the representative of money, and perhaps a full tenth part of all the land in France, which has now acquired the worst and most pernicious part of the evil of a paper circulation, the greatest possible uncertainty in its value. They have reversed the Latonian kindness to the landed property of Delos. They have sent theirs to be blown about, like the light fragments of a wreck, *oras et littora circum.*

The new dealers being all habitually adventurers, and without any fixed habits or local predilections, will purchase to job out again, as the market of paper, or of money, or of land, shall present an advantage. For though a holy bishop thinks that agriculture will derive great advantages from the "*enlightened*" usurers who are to purchase the church confiscations, I, who am not a good, but an old farmer, with great humility beg leave to tell his late lordship, that usury is not tutor of agriculture; and if the word "enlightened" be understood according to the new dictionary, as it always is in your new schools, I cannot conceive how a man's not believing in God can teach him to cultivate the earth with the least of any additional skill or encouragement. "Diis immortalibus sero," said an old Roman, when he held one handle of the plough, whilst Death held the other. Though you were to join in the commission all the directors of the two academies to the directors of the *Caisse d'Escompte*, one old experienced peasant is worth them all. I have got more information upon a curious and interesting branch of husbandry, in one short conversation with an old Carthusian monk, that I have derived from all the bank directors that I have ever conversed with.

However, there is no cause for apprehension from the meddling of money-dealers with rural economy. These gentlemen are too wise in their generation. At first, perhaps, their tender and susceptible imaginations may be captivated with the innocent and unprofitable delights of a pastoral life; but in a little time they will find that agriculture is a trade much more laborious, and much less lucrative than that which they had left. After making its panegyric, they will turn their backs on it like their great precursor and prototype. They may, like him, begin by singing "*Beatus ille*"—but what will be the end?

> Hæc ubi locutus fœnerator Alphius
> Jam jam futurus rusticus
> Omnem relegit idibus pecuniam;
> Quærit calendis ponere.

They will cultivate the *Caisse d'Eglise*, under the sacred auspices of this prelate, with much more profit than its vineyards and its corn-fields. They will employ their talents according to their habits and their interests. They will not follow the plough whilst they can direct treasuries, and govern provinces.

Your legislators, in every thing new, are the very first who have founded a commonwealth upon gaming, and infused this spirit into it as its vital breath. The great object in these politics is to metamorphose France, from a great kingdom into one great play-table; to turn its inhabitants into a nation of gamesters; to make speculation as extensive as life; to mix it with all its concerns; and to divert the whole of the hopes and fears of the people from their usual channels, into the impulses, passions, and superstitions of those who live on chances. They loudly proclaim their opinion, that this their present system of a republic cannot possibly exist without this kind of gaming fund; and that the very thread of its life is spun out of the staple of these speculations. The old gaming in funds was mischievous enough undoubtedly; but it was so only to individuals. Even when it had its greatest extent, in

the Mississippi and South Sea, it affected but few, comparatively; where it extends further, as in lotteries, the spirit has but a single object. But where the law, which in most circumstances forbids, and in none countenances gaming, is itself debauched, so as to reverse its nature and policy, and expressly to force the subject to this destructive table, by bringing the spirit and symbols of gaming into the minutest matters, and engaging every body in it, and in every thing, a more dreadful epidemic distemper of that kind is spread than yet has appeared in the world. With you a man can neither earn nor buy his dinner, without a speculation. What he receives in the morning will not have the same value at night. What he is compelled to take as pay for an old debt, will not be received as the same when he comes to pay a debt contracted by himself; nor will it be the same when by prompt payment he would avoid contracting any debt at all. Industry must wither away. Economy must be driven from your country. Careful provision will have no existence. Who will labor without knowing the amount of his pay? Who will study to increase what none can estimate? Who will accumulate, when he does not know the value of what he saves? If you abstract it from its uses in gaming, to accumulate your paper wealth, would be not the providence of a man, but the distempered instinct of a jackdaw.

The truly melancholy part of the policy of systematically making a nation of gamesters is this; that though all are forced to play, few can understand the game; and fewer still are in a condition to avail themselves of the knowledge. The many must be the dupes of the few who conduct the machine of these speculations. What effect it must have on the country-people is visible. The townsman can calculate from day to day: not so the inhabitant of the country. When the peasant first brings his corn to market, the magistrate in the towns obliges him to take the assignat at par; when he goes to the shop with his money, he finds it seven per cent. the worse for crossing the way. This market he will not readily resort to again. The towns-people will be inflamed! they

will force the country-people to bring their corn. Resistance will begin, and the murders of Paris and St. Dennis may be renewed through all France.

What signifies the empty compliment paid to the country by giving it perhaps more than its share in the theory of your representation? Where have you placed the real power over monied and landed circulation? Where have you placed the means of raising and falling the value of every man's freehold? Those whose operations can take from, or add ten per cent. to, the possessions of every man in France, must be the masters of every man in France. The whole of the power obtained by this revolution will settle in the towns among the burghers, and the monied directors who lead them. The landed gentleman, the yeoman, and the peasant, have, none of them, habits, or inclinations, or experience, which can lead them to any share in this the sole source of power and influence now left in France. The very nature of a country life, the very nature of landed property, in all the occupations, and all the pleasures they afford, render combination and arrangement (the sole way of procuring and exerting influence) in a manner impossible amongst country-people. Combine them by all the art you can, and all the industry, they are always dissolving into individuality. Any thing in the nature of incorporation is almost impracticable amongst them. Hope, fear, alarm, jealousy, the ephemerous tale that does its business and dies in a day, all these things, which are the reins and spurs by which leaders check or urge the minds of followers, are not easily employed, or hardly at all, amongst scattered people. They assemble, they arm, they act with the utmost difficulty, and at the greatest charge. Their efforts, if ever they can be commenced, cannot be sustained. They cannot proceed systematically. If the country gentlemen attempt an influence through the mere income of their property, what is it to that of those who have ten times their income to sell, and who can ruin their property by bringing their plunder to meet it at market? If the landed man wishes to mortgage, he falls the

value of his land, and raises the value of assignats. He augments the power of his enemy by the very means he must take to contend with him. The country gentleman therefore, the officer by sea and land, the man of liberal views and habits, attached to no profession, will be as completely excluded from the government of his country as if he were legislatively proscribed. It is obvious, that in the towns, all the things which conspire against the country gentleman, combine in favor of the money manager and director. In towns combination is natural. The habits of burghers, their occupations, their diversion, their business, their idleness, continually bring them into mutual contact. Their virtues and their vices are sociable; they are always in garrison; and they come embodied and half disciplined into the hands of those who mean to form them for civil or military action.

All these considerations leave no doubt on my mind, that if this monster of a constitution can continue, France will be wholly governed by the agitators in corporations, by societies in the towns formed of directors in assignats, and trustees for the sale of church lands, attorneys, agents, money jobbers, speculators, and adventurers, composing an ignoble oligarchy, founded on the destruction of the crown, the church, the nobility, and the people. Here end all the deceitful dreams and visions of the equality and rights of men. In "the Serbonian bog" of this base oligarchy they are all absorbed, sunk, and lost for ever.

Though human eyes cannot trace them, one would be tempted to think some great offences in France must cry to heaven, which has thought fit to punish it with a subjection to a vile and inglorious domination, in which no comfort or compensation is to be found in any, even of those false splendors, which, playing about other tyrannies, prevent mankind from feeling themselves dishonored even whilst they are oppressed. I must confess I am touched with a sorrow, mixed with some indignation, at the conduct of a few men, once of great rank, and still of great character, who, deluded with specious names, have engaged in a business too deep for the line

of their understanding to fathom; who have lent their fair reputation and the authority of their high-sounding names, to the designs of men with whom they could not be acquainted; and have thereby made their very virtues operate to the ruin of their country.

So far as to the first cementing principle.

The second material of cement for their new republic is the superiority of the city of Paris; and this I admit is strongly connected with the other cementing principle of paper circulation and confiscation. It is in this part of the project we must look for the cause of the destruction of all the old bounds of provinces and jurisdictions, ecclesiastical and secular, and the dissolution of all ancient combinations of things, as well as the formation of so many small unconnected republics. The power of the city of Paris is evidently one great spring of all their politics. It is through the power of Paris, now become the centre and focus of jobbing, that the leaders of this faction direct, or rather command, the whole legislative and the whole executive government. Every thing therefore must be done which can confirm the authority of that city over the other republics. Paris is compact; she has an enormous strength, wholly disproportioned to the force of any of the square republics; and this strength is collected and condensed within a narrow compass. Paris has a natural and easy connection of its parts, which will not be affected by any scheme of a geometrical constitution, nor does it much signify whether its proportion of representation be more or less, since it has the whole draught of fishes in its drag-net. The other divisions of the kingdom being hackled and torn to pieces, and separated from all their habitual means, and even principles of union, cannot, for some time at least, confederate against her. Nothing was to be left in all the subordinate members, but weakness, disconnection, and confusion. To confirm this part of the plan, the assembly has lately come to a resolution, that no two of their republics shall have the same commander in chief.

To a person who takes a view of the whole, the strength

of Paris thus formed, will appear a system of general weakness. It is boasted that the geometrical policy has been adopted, that all local ideas should be sunk, and that the people should be no longer Gascons, Picards, Bretons, Normans, but Frenchmen, with one country, one heart, and one assembly. But instead of being all Frenchmen, the greater likelihood is, that the inhabitants of that region will shortly have no country. No man ever was attached by a sense of pride, partiality, or real affection, to a description of square measurements. He never will glory in belonging to the Chequer No. 71, or to any other badge-ticket. We begin our public affections in our families. No cold relation is a zealous citizen. We pass on to our neighborhoods, and our habitual provincial connections. These are inns and resting places. Such divisions of our country as have been formed by habit, and not by a sudden jerk of authority, were so many little images of the great country in which the heart found something which it could fill. The love to the whole is not extinguished by this subordinate partiality. Perhaps it is a sort of elemental training to those higher and more large regards, by which alone men come to be affected, as with their own concern, in the prosperity of a kingdom so extensive as that of France. In that general territory itself, as in the old name of provinces, the citizens are interested from old prejudices and unreasoned habits, and not on account of the geometric properties of its figure. The power and preëminence of Paris does certainly press down and hold these republics together as long as it lasts. But, for the reasons I have already given you, I think it cannot last very long.

Passing from the civil creating and the civil cementing principles of this constitution, to the national assembly, which is to appear and act as sovereign, we see a body in its constitution with every possible power, and no possible external control. We see a body without fundamental laws, without established maxims, without respected rules of proceeding, which nothing can keep firm to any system whatsoever.

Their idea of their powers is always taken at the utmost stretch of legislative competency, and their examples for common cases, from the exceptions of the most urgent necessity. The future is to be in most respects like the present assembly; but, by the mode of the new elections and the tendency of the new circulations, it will be purged of the small degree of internal control existing in a minority chosen originally from various interests, and preserving something of their spirit. If possible, the next assembly must be worse than the present. The present, by destroying and altering every thing, will leave to their successors apparently nothing popular to do. They will be roused by emulation and example to enterprises the boldest and the most absurd. To suppose such an assembly sitting in perfect quietude is ridiculous.

Your all-sufficient legislators, in their hurry to do every thing at once, have forgot one thing that seems essential, and which, I believe, never has been before, in the theory or the practice, omitted by any projector of a republic. They have forgot to constitute a *senate*, or something of that nature and character. Never, before this time, was heard of a body politic composed of one legislative and active assembly, and its executive officers, without such a council; without something to which foreign states might connect themselves; something to which, in the ordinary detail of government, the people could look up; something which might give a bias and steadiness, and preserve something like consistency in the proceedings of state. Such a body kings generally have as a council. A monarchy may exist without it; but it seems to be in the very essence of a republican government. It holds a sort of middle place between the supreme power exercised by the people, or immediately delegated from them, and the mere executive. Of this there are no traces in your constitution; and in providing nothing of this kind, your Solons and Numas have, as much as in any thing else, discovered a sovereign incapacity.

Let us now turn our eyes to what they have done towards the formation of an executive power. For this they have

chosen a degraded king. This their first executive officer is to be a machine, without any sort of deliberative discretion in any one act of his function. At best he is but a channel to convey to the national assembly such matter as may import that body to know. If he had been made the exclusive channel, the power would not have been without its importance; though infinitely perilous to those who would choose to exercise it. But public intelligence and statement of facts may pass to the assembly, with equal authenticity, through any other conveyance. As to the means, therefore, of giving a direction to measures by the statement of an authorized reporter, this office of intelligence is as nothing.

To consider the French scheme of an executive officer, in its two natural divisions of civil and political—In the first it must be observed, that, according to the new constitution, the higher parts of judicature, in either of its lines, are not in the king. The king of France is not the fountain of justice. The judges, neither the original nor the appellate, are of his nomination. He neither proposes the candidates, nor has a negative on the choice. He is not even the public prosecutor. He serves only as a notary to authenticate the choice made of the judges in the several districts. By his officers he is to execute their sentence. When we look into the true nature of his authority, he appears to be nothing more than a chief of bumbailiffs, serjeants at mace, catchpoles, jailers, and hangmen. It is impossible to place any thing called royalty in a more degrading point of view. A thousand times better had it been for the dignity of this unhappy prince, that he had nothing at all to do with the administration of justice, deprived as he is of all that is venerable, and all that is consolatory in that function, without power of originating any process; without a power of suspension, mitigation, or pardon. Every thing in justice that is vile and odious is thrown upon him. It was not for nothing that the assembly has been at such pains to remove the stigma from certain offices, when they were resolved to place the person who had lately been their king in a situation but one

degree above the executioner, and in an office nearly of the same quality. It is not in nature, that situated as the king of the French now is, he can respect himself, or can be respected by others.

View this new executive officer on the side of his political capacity, as he acts under the orders of the national assembly. To execute laws is a royal office; to execute orders is not to be a king. However, a political executive magistracy, though merely such, is a great trust. It is a trust indeed that has much depending upon its faithful and diligent performance, both in the person presiding in it and in all its subordinates. Means of performing this duty ought to be given by regulation; and dispositions towards it ought to be infused by the circumstances attendant on the trust. It ought to be environed with dignity, authority, and consideration, and it ought to lead to glory. The office of execution is an office of exertion. It is not from impotence we are to expect the tasks of power. What sort of person is a king to command executory service, who has no means whatsoever to reward it? Not in a permanent office; not in a grant of land; no, not in a pension of fifty pounds a year; not in the vainest and most trivial title. In France the king is no more the fountain of honor than he is the fountain of justice. All rewards, all distinctions are in other hands. Those who serve the king can be actuated by no natural motive but fear; by a fear of every thing except their master. His functions of internal coercion are as odious, as those which he exercises in the department of justice. If relief is to be given to any municipality, the assembly gives it. If troops are to be sent to reduce them to obedience to the assembly, the king is to execute the order; and upon every occasion he is to be spattered over with the blood of his people. He has no negative; yet his name and authority is used to enforce every harsh decree. Nay, he must concur in the butchery of those who shall attempt to free him from his imprisonment, or shew the slightest attachment to his person or to his ancient authority.

Executive magistracy ought to be constituted in such a

manner, that those who compose it should be disposed to love and to venerate those whom they are bound to obey. A purposed neglect, or, what is worse, a literal but perverse and malignant obedience, must be the ruin of the wisest counsels. In vain will the law attempt to anticipate or to follow such studied neglects and fraudulent attentions. To make men act zealously is not in the competence of law. Kings, even such as are truly kings, may and ought to bear the freedom of subjects that are obnoxious to them. They may too, without derogating from themselves, bear even the authority of such persons if it promotes their service. Louis the Thirteenth mortally hated the cardinal de Richelieu; but his support of that minister against his rivals was the source of all the glory of his reign, and the solid foundation of his throne itself. Louis the Fourteenth when come to the throne, did not love the cardinal Mazarin; but for his interests he preserved him in power. When old, he detested Louvois; but for years, whilst he faithfully served his greatness, he endured his person. When George the Second took Mr. Pitt, who certainly was not agreeable to him, into his councils, he did nothing which could humble a wise sovereign. But these ministers, who were chosen by affairs, not by affections, acted in the name of, and in trust for, kings; and not as their avowed, constitutional, and ostensible masters. I think it impossible that any king, when he has recovered his first terrors, can cordially infuse vivacity and vigor into measures which he knows to be dictated by those who he must be persuaded are in the highest degree ill-affected to his person. Will any ministers, who serve such a king (or whatever he may be called) with but a decent appearance of respect, cordially obey the orders of those whom but the other day in his name they had committed to the Bastile? Will they obey the orders of those whom, whilst they were exercising despotic justice upon them, they conceived they were treating with lenity; and for whom, in a prison, they thought they had provided an asylum? If you expect such obedience, amongst your other innovations and regenerations, you ought to make a revolution in nature, and

provide a new constitution for the human mind. Otherwise, your supreme government cannot harmonize with its executory system. There are cases in which we cannot take up with names and abstractions. You may call half a dozen leading individuals, whom we have reason to fear and hate, the nation. It makes no other difference, than to make us fear and hate them the more. If it had been thought justifiable and expedient to make such a revolution by such means, and through such persons, as you have made yours, it would have been more wise to have completed the business of the fifth and sixth of October. The new executive officer would then owe his situation to those who are his creators as well as his masters; and he might be bound in interest, in the society of crime, and (if in crimes there could be virtues) in gratitude to serve those who had promoted him to a place of great lucre and great sensual indulgence; and of something more: for more he must have received from those who certainly would not have limited an aggrandized creature, as they have done a submitting antagonist.

A king circumstanced as the present, if he is totally stupefied by his misfortunes, so as to think it not the necessity, but the premium and privilege of life, to eat and sleep, without any regard to glory, can never be fit for the office. If he feels as men commonly feel, he must be sensible, that an office so circumstanced is one in which he can obtain no fame or reputation. He has no generous interest that can excite him to action. At best, his conduct will be passive and defensive. To inferior people such an office might be matter of honor. But to be raised to it, and to descend to it, are different things, and suggest different sentiments. Does he *really* name the ministers? They will have a sympathy with him. Are they forced upon him? The whole business between them and the nominal king will be mutual counteraction. In all other countries, the office of ministers of state is of the highest dignity. In France it is full of peril and incapable of glory. Rivals however they will have in their nothingness, whilst shallow ambition exists in the world, or the desire of a miser-

able salary is an incentive to short-sighted avarice. Those competitors of the ministers are enabled by your constitution to attack them in their vital parts, whilst they have not the means of repelling their charges in any other than the degrading character of culprits. The ministers of state in France are the only persons in that country who are incapable of a share in the national councils. What ministers! What councils! What a nation!—But they are responsible. It is a poor service that is to be had from responsibility. The elevation of mind, to be derived from fear, will never make a nation glorious. Responsibility prevents crimes. It makes all attempts against the laws dangerous. But for a principle of active and zealous service, none but idiots could think of it. Is the conduct of a war to be trusted to a man who may abhor its principle; who, in every step he may take to render it successful, confirms the power of those by whom he is oppressed? Will foreign states seriously treat with him who has no prerogative of peace or war; no, not so much as in a single vote by himself or his ministers, or by any one whom he can possibly influence? A state of contempt is not a state for a prince: better get rid of him at once.

I know it will be said that these humors in the court and executive government will continue only through this generation; and that the king has been brought to declare the dauphin shall be educated in a conformity to his situation. If he is made to conform to his situation, he will have no education at all. His training must be worse even than that of an arbitrary monarch. If he reads,—whether he reads or not, some good or evil genius will tell him his ancestors were kings. Thenceforward his object must be to assert himself, and to avenge his parents. This you will say is not his duty. That may be; but it is nature; and whilst you pique nature against you, you do unwisely to trust to duty. In this futile scheme of polity, the state nurses in its bosom, for the present, a source of weakness, perplexity, counteraction, inefficiency, and decay; and it prepares the means of its final ruin. In short, I see nothing in the executive force

(I cannot call it authority) that has even an appearance of vigor, or that has the smallest degree of just correspondence or symmetry, or amicable relation with the supreme power, either as it now exists, or as it is planned for the future government.

You have settled, by an economy as perverted as the policy, two* establishments of government; one real, one fictitious. Both maintained at a vast expense; but the fictitious at, I think, the greatest. Such a machine as the latter is not worth the grease of its wheels. The expense is exorbitant; and neither the shew nor the use deserve the tenth part of the charge. Oh! but I don't do justice to the talents of the legislators: I don't allow, as I ought to do, for necessity. Their scheme of executive force was not their choice. This pageant must be kept. The people would not consent to part with it. Right; I understand you. You do, in spite of your grand theories, to which you would have heaven and earth to bend, you do know how to conform yourselves to the nature and circumstances of things. But when you were obliged to conform thus far to circumstances, you ought to have carried your submission farther, and to have made what you were obliged to take, a proper instrument, and useful to its end. That was in your power. For instance, among many others, it was in your power to leave to your king the right of peace and war. What; to leave to the executive magistrate the most dangerous of all prerogatives? I know none more dangerous; nor any one more necessary to be so trusted. I do not say that this prerogative ought to be trusted to your king, unless he enjoyed other auxiliary trusts along with it, which he does not now hold. But, if he did possess them, hazardous as they are undoubtedly, advantages would arise from such a constitution, more than compensating the risk. There is no other way of keeping the several potentates of Europe from intriguing distinctly and personally with the members of your assembly, from intermeddling in

* In reality three, to reckon the provincial republican establishments.

all your concerns, and fomenting, in the heart of your country, the most pernicious of all factions; factions in the interest and under the direction of foreign powers. From that worst of evils, thank God, we are still free. Your skill, if you had any, would be well employed to find out indirect correctives and controls upon this perilous trust. If you did not like those which in England we have chosen, your leaders might have exerted their abilities in contriving better. If it were necessary to exemplify the consequences of such an executive government as yours, in the management of great affairs, I should refer you to the reports of M. de Montmorin to the national assembly, and all the other proceedings relative to the differences between Great Britain and Spain. It would be treating your understanding with disrespect to point them out to you.

I hear that the persons who are called ministers have signified an intention of resigning their places. I am rather astonished that they have not resigned long since. For the universe I would not have stood in the situation in which they have been for this last twelvemonth. They wished well, I take it for granted, to the revolution. Let this fact be as it may, they could not, placed as they were upon an eminence, though an eminence of humiliation, but be the first to see collectively, and to feel each in his own department, the evils which have been produced by that revolution. In every step which they took, or forbore to take, they must have felt the degraded situation of their country, and their utter incapacity of serving it. They are in a species of subordinate servitude, in which no men before them were ever seen. Without confidence from their sovereign, on whom they were forced, or from the assembly who forced them upon him, all the noble functions of their office are executed by committees of the assembly, without any regard whatsoever to their personal, or their official authority. They are to execute, without power; they are to be responsible, without discretion; they are to deliberate, without choice. In their puzzled situation, under two sovereigns, over neither

of whom they have any influence, they must act in such a manner as (in effect, whatever they may intend,) sometimes to betray the one, sometimes the other, and always to betray themselves. Such has been their situation; such must be the situation of those who succeed them. I have much respect, and many good wishes, for Mr. Necker. I am obliged to him for attentions. I thought when his enemies had driven him from Versailles, that his exile was a subject of most serious congratulation—*sed multæ urbes et publica vota vicerunt.* He is now sitting on the ruins of the finances, and of the monarchy of France.

A great deal more might be observed on the strange constitution of the executory part of the new government; but fatigue must give bounds to the discussion of subjects, which in themselves have hardly any limits.

As little genius and talent am I able to perceive in the plan of judicature formed by the national assembly. According to their invariable course, the framers of your constitution have begun with the utter abolition of the parliaments. These venerable bodies, like the rest of the old government, stood in need of reform, even though there should be no change made in the monarchy. They required several more alterations to adapt them to the system of a free constitution. But they had particulars in their constitution, and those not a few, which deserved approbation from the wise. They possessed one fundamental excellence; they were independent. The most doubtful circumstance attendant on their office, that of its being vendible, contributed however to this independency of character. They held for life. Indeed they may be said to have held by inheritance. Appointed by the monarch, they were considered as nearly out of his power. The most determined exertions of that authority against them only shewed their radical independence. They composed permanent bodies politic, constituted to resist arbitrary innovation; and from that corporate constitution, and from most of their forms, they were well calculated to afford both certainty and stability to the laws. They had been a safe

asylum to secure these laws, in all the revolutions of humor and opinion. They had saved that sacred deposit of the country during the reigns of arbitrary princes, and the struggles of arbitrary factions. They kept alive the memory and record of the constitution. They were the great security to private property; which might be said (when personal liberty had no existence) to be, in fact, as well guarded in France as in any other country. Whatever is supreme in a state, ought to have, as much as possible, its judicial authority so constituted as not only not to depend upon it, but in some sort to balance it. It ought to give a security to its justice against its power. It ought to make its judicature, as it were, something exterior to the state.

These parliaments had furnished, not the best certainly, but some considerable corrective to the excesses and vices of the monarchy. Such an independent judicature was ten times more necessary when a democracy became the absolute power of the country. In that constitution, elective, temporary, local judges, such as you have contrived, exercising their dependent functions in a narrow society, must be the worst of all tribunals. In them it will be vain to look for any appearance of justice towards strangers, towards the obnoxious rich, towards the minority of routed parties, towards all those who in the election have supported unsuccessful candidates. It will be impossible to keep the new tribunals clear of the worst spirit of faction. All contrivances by ballot, we know experimentally to be vain and childish to prevent a discovery of inclinations. Where they may the best answer the purposes of concealment, they answer to produce suspicion, and this is a still more mischievous cause of partiality.

If the parliaments had been preserved, instead of being dissolved at so ruinous a change to the nation, they might have served in this new commonwealth, perhaps not precisely the same (I do not mean an exact parallel) but near the same purposes as the court and senate of Areopagus did in Athens; that is, as one of the balances and correctives

to the evils of a light and unjust democracy. Every one knows that this tribunal was the great stay of that state; every one knows with what care it was upheld, and with what a religious awe it was consecrated. The parliaments were not wholly free from faction, I admit; but this evil was exterior and accidental, and not so much the vice of their constitution itself, as it must be in your new contrivance of sexennial elective judicatories. Several English commend the abolition of the old tribunals, as supposing that they determined every thing by bribery and corruption. But they have stood the test of monarchic and republican scrutiny. The court was well disposed to prove corruption on those bodies when they were dissolved in 1771. Those who have again dissolved them would have done the same if they could—but both inquisitions having failed, I conclude, that gross pecuniary corruption must have been rather rare amongst them.

It would have been prudent, along with the parliaments, to preserve their ancient power of registering, and of remonstrating at least, upon all the decrees of the national assembly, as they did upon those which passed in the time of the monarchy. It would be a means of squaring the occasional decrees of a democracy to some principles of general jurisprudence. The vice of the ancient democracies, and one cause of their ruin, was, that they ruled, as you do, by occasional decrees, *psephismata*. This practice soon broke in upon the tenor and consistency of the laws; it abated the respect of the people towards them; and totally destroyed them in the end.

Your vesting the power of remonstrance, which, in the time of the monarchy, existed in the parliament of Paris, in your principal executive officer, whom, in spite of common sense, you persevere in calling king, is the height of absurdity. You ought never to suffer remonstrance from him who is to execute. This is to understand neither council nor execution; neither authority nor obedience. The person whom you call king, ought not to have this power, or he ought to have more.

Your present arrangement is strictly judicial. Instead of imitating your monarchy, and seating your judges on a bench of independence, your object is to reduce them to the most blind obedience. As you have changed all things, you have invented new principles of order. You first appoint judges, who, I suppose, are to determine according to law, and then you let them know, that, at some time or other, you intend to give them some law by which they are to determine. Any studies which they have made (if any they have made) are to be useless to them. But to supply these studies, they are to be sworn to obey all the rules, orders, and instructions, which from time to time they are to receive from the national assembly. These if they submit to, they leave no ground of law to the subject. They become complete and most dangerous instruments in the hands of the governing power, which, in the midst of a cause, or on the prospect of it, may wholly change the rule of decision. If these orders of the national assembly come to be contrary to the will of the people, who locally choose those judges, such confusion must happen as is terrible to think of. For the judges owe their place to the local authority; and the commands they are sworn to obey come from those who have no share in their appointment. In the mean time they have the example of the court of *Chatelet* to encourage and guide them in the exercise of their functions. That court is to try criminals sent to it by the national assembly, or brought before it by other courses of delation. They sit under a guard, to save their own lives. They know not by what law they judge, nor under what authority they act, nor by what tenure they hold. It is thought that they are sometimes obliged to condemn at peril of their lives. This is not perhaps certain, nor can it be ascertained; but when they acquit, we know they have seen the persons whom they discharge, with perfect impunity to the actors, hanged at the door of their court.

The assembly indeed promise that they will form a body of law, which shall be short, simple, clear, and so forth. That is, by their short laws, they will leave much to the dis-

cretion of the judge; whilst they have exploded the authority of all the learning which could make judicial discretion (a thing perilous at best) deserving the appellation of a *sound* discretion.

It is curious to observe, that the administrative bodies are carefully exempted from the jurisdiction of these new tribunals. That is, those persons are exempted from the power of the laws, who ought to be the most entirely submitted to them. Those who execute public pecuniary trusts, ought of all men to be the most strictly held to their duty. One would have thought that it must have been among your earliest cares, if you did not mean that those administrative bodies should be real sovereign independent states, to form an awful tribunal, like your late parliaments, or like our king's-bench, where all corporate officers might obtain protection in the legal exercise of their functions, and would find coercion if they trespassed against their legal duty. But the cause of the exemption is plain. These administrative bodies are the great instruments of the present leaders in their progress through democracy to oligarchy. They must therefore be put above the law. It will be said, that the legal tribunals which you have made are unfit to coerce them. They are undoubtedly. They are unfit for any rational purpose. It will be said too, that the administrative bodies will be accountable to the general assembly. This I fear is talking, without much consideration, of the nature of that assembly, or of these corporations. However, to be subject to the pleasure of that assembly, is not to be subject to law, either for protection or for constraint.

This establishment of judges as yet wants something to its completion. It is to be crowned by a new tribunal. This is to be a grand state judicature; and it is to judge of crimes committed against the nation, that is, against the power of the assembly. It seems as if they had something in their view of the nature of the high court of justice erected in England during the time of the great usurpation. As they have not yet finished this part of the scheme, it is impossible to

form a direct judgment upon it. However, if great care is not taken to form it in a spirit very different from that which has guided them in their proceedings relative to state offences, this tribunal, subservient to their inquisition, *the committee of research*, will extinguish the last sparks of liberty in France, and settle the most dreadful and arbitrary tyranny ever known in any nation. If they wish to give to this tribunal any appearance of liberty and justice, they must not evoke from, or send to it, the causes relative to their own members, at their pleasure. They must also remove the seat of that tribunal out of the republic of Paris.*

Has more wisdom been displayed in the constitution of your army than what is discoverable in your plan of judicature? The able arrangement of this part is the more difficult, and requires the greater skill and attention, not only as a great concern in itself, but as it is the third cementing principle in the new body of republics, which you call the French nation. Truly it is not easy to divine what that army may become at last. You have voted a very large one, and on good appointments, at least fully equal to your apparent means of payment? But what is the principle of its discipline? or whom is it to obey? You have got the wolf by the ears, and I wish you joy of the happy position in which you have chosen to place yourselves, and in which you are well circumstanced for a free deliberation, relatively to that army, or to any thing else.

The minister and secretary of state for the war department is M. de la Tour du Pin. This gentleman, like his colleagues in administration, is a most zealous asserter of the revolution, and a sanguine admirer of the new constitution, which originated in that event. His statement of facts, relative to the military of France, is important, not only from his official and personal authority, but because it displays very clearly the actual condition of the army in France, and be-

* For further elucidations upon the subject of all these judicatures, and of the committee of research, see M. de Calonne's work.

cause it throws light on the principles upon which the assembly proceeds, in the administration of this critical object. It may enable us to form some judgment, how far it may be expedient in this country to imitate the martial policy of France.

M. de la Tour du Pin, on the fourth of last June, comes to give an account of the state of his department, as it exists under the auspices of the national assembly. No man knows it so well; no man can express it better. Addressing himself to the national assembly, he says, "His majesty has *this day* sent me to apprize you of the multiplied disorders of which *every day* he receives the most distressing intelligence. The army (le corps militaire) threatens to fall into the most turbulent anarchy. Entire regiments have dared to violate at once the respect due to the laws, to the king, to the order established by your decrees, and to the oaths which they have taken with the most awful solemnity. Compelled by my duty to give you information of these excesses, my heart bleeds when I consider who they are that have committed them. Those, against whom it is not in my power to withhold the most grievous complaints, are a part of that very soldiery which to this day have been so full of honor and loyalty, and with whom, for fifty years, I have lived the comrade and the friend.

"What incomprehensible spirit of delirium and delusion has all at once led them astray? Whilst you are indefatigable in establishing uniformity in the empire, and moulding the whole into one coherent and consistent body; whilst the French are taught by you, at once the respect which the laws owe to the rights of man, and that which the citizens owe to the laws, the administration of the army presents nothing but disturbance and confusion. I see in more than one corps the bonds of discipline relaxed or broken; the most unheard-of pretensions avowed directly and without any disguise; the ordinances without force; the chiefs without authority; the military chest and the colors carried off; the authority of the king himself [*risum teneatis*] proudly defied; the officers

despised, degraded, threatened, driven away, and some of them prisoners in the midst of their corps, dragging on a precarious life in the bosom of disgust and humiliation. To fill up the measure of all these horrors, the commandants of places have had their throats cut, under the eyes, and almost in the arms of their own soldiers.

"These evils are great; but they are not the worst consequences which may be produced by such military insurrections. Sooner or later they may menace the nation itself. *The nature of things requires* that the army should never act but as *an instrument.* The moment that, erecting itself into a deliberative body, it shall act according to its own resolutions, the *government, be it what it may, will immediately degenerate into a military democracy;* a species of political monster, which has always ended by devouring those who have produced it.

"After all this, who must not be alarmed at the irregular consultations, and turbulent committees, formed in some regiments by the common soldiers and non-commissioned officers, without the knowledge, or even in contempt of the authority of their superiors; although the presence and concurrence of those superiors, could give no authority to such monstrous democratic assemblies [comices]."

It is not necessary to add much to this finished picture: finished as far as its canvass admits; but, as I apprehend, not taking in the whole of the nature and complexity of the disorders of this military democracy, which, the minister at war truly and wisely observes, wherever it exists, must be the true constitution of the state, by whatever formal appellation it may pass. For, though he informs the assembly that the more considerable part of the army have not cast off their obedience, but are still attached to their duty, yet those travelers who have seen the corps whose conduct is the best, rather observe in them the absence of mutiny than the existence of discipline.

I cannot help pausing here for a moment, to reflect upon the expressions of surprise which this minister has let fall, relative

to the excesses he relates. To him the departure of the troops from their ancient principles of loyalty and honor seems quite inconceivable. Surely those to whom he addresses himself know the causes of it but too well. They know the doctrines which they have preached, the decrees which they have passed, the practices which they have countenanced. The soldiers remember the 6th of October. They recollect the French guards. They have not forgot the taking of the king's castles in Paris, and at Marseilles. That the governors in both places were murdered with impunity, is a fact that has not passed out of their minds. They do not abandon the principles laid down so ostentatiously and laboriously of the equality of men. They cannot shut their eyes to the degradation of the whole noblesse of France; and the suppression of the very idea of a gentleman. The total abolition of titles and distinctions is not lost upon them. But M. du Pin is astonished at their disloyalty, when the doctors of the assembly have taught them at the same time the respect due to laws. It is easy to judge which of the two sorts of lessons men with arms in their hands are likely to learn. As to the authority of the king, we may collect from the minister himself (if any argument on that head were not quite superfluous) that it is not of more consideration with these troops, than it is with every body else. "The king," says he, "has over and over again repeated his orders to put a stop to these excesses: but, in so terrible a crisis, *your* [the assembly's] concurrence is become indispensably necessary to prevent the evils which menace the state. *You* unite to the force of the legislative power, *that of opinion* still more important." To be sure the army can have no opinion of the power or authority of the king. Perhaps the soldier has by this time learned, that the assembly itself does not enjoy a much greater degree of liberty than that royal figure.

It is now to be seen what has been proposed in this exigency, one of the greatest that can happen in a state. The minister requests the assembly to array itself in all its terrors, and to call forth all its majesty. He desires that the grave

and severe principles announced by them may give vigor to the king's proclamation. After this we should have looked for courts civil and martial; breaking of some corps, decimating others, and all the terrible means which necessity has employed in such cases to arrest the progress of the most terrible of all evils; particularly, one might expect, that a serious inquiry would be made into the murder of commandants in the view of their soldiers. Not one word of all this, or of any thing like it. After they had been told that the soldiery trampled upon the decrees of the assembly promulgated by the king, the assembly pass new decrees; and they authorize the king to make new proclamations. After the secretary at war had stated that the regiments had paid no regard to oaths *prêtés avec la plus imposante solemnité*—they propose—what? More oaths. They renew decrees and proclamations as they experience their insufficiency, and they multiply oaths in proportion as they weaken, in the minds of men, the sanctions of religion. I hope that handy abridgments of the excellent sermons of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and Helvetius, on the Immortality of the Soul, on a Particular Superintending Providence, and on a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, are sent down to the soldiers along with their civic oaths. Of this I have no doubt; as I understand that a certain description of reading makes no inconsiderable part of their military exercises, and that they are full as well supplied with the ammunition of pamphlets as of cartridges.

To prevent the mischiefs arising from conspiracies, irregular consultations, seditious committees, and monstrous democratic assemblies ["comitia, comices"] of the soldiers, and all the disorders arising from idleness, luxury, dissipation, and insubordination, I believe the most astonishing means have been used that ever occurred to men, even in all the inventions of this prolific age. It is no less than this:—The king has promulgated in circular letters to all the regiments his direct authority and encouragement, that the several corps should join themselves with the clubs and confederations in the several municipalities, and mix with them in

their feasts and civic entertainments! This jolly discipline, it seems, is to soften the ferocity of their minds; to reconcile them to their bottle companions of other descriptions; and to merge particular conspiracies in more general associations.* That this remedy would be pleasing to the soldiers, as they are described by M. de la Tour du Pin, I can readily believe; and that, however mutinous otherwise, they will dutifully submit themselves to *these* royal proclamations. But I should question whether all this civic swearing, clubbing, and feasting, would dispose them more than at present they are disposed, to an obedience to their officers; or teach them better to submit to the austere rules of military discipline. It will make them admirable citizens after the French mode, but not quite so good soldiers after any mode. A doubt might well arise, whether the conversations at these good tables would fit them a great deal the better for the character of *mere instruments*, which this veteran officer and statesman justly observes the nature of things always requires an army to be.

Concerning the likelihood of this improvement in discipline, by the free conversation of the soldiers with the municipal festive societies, which is thus officially encouraged by royal authority and sanction, we may judge by the state of the municipalities themselves, furnished to us by the war minister in this very speech. He conceives good hopes of the success of his endeavors towards restoring order *for the present* from the good disposition of certain regiments; but he finds something cloudy with regard to the future. As to preventing the return of confusion, "for this, the administration (says he) cannot be answerable to you, as long as they see the municipalities arrogate to themselves an authority over the troops,

* Comme sa majesté y a reconnu, non une système d'associations particulières, mais une réunion de volontes de tous les François pour la liberté et la prospérité communes, ainsi pour le maintien de l'ordre publique; il a pensé qu'il convenoit que chaque régiment prit part à ces fêtes civiques pour multiplier les rapports, et referrer les liens d'union entre les citoyens et les troupes.—Lest I should not be credited, I insert the words, authorizing the troops to feast with the popular confederacies.

which your institutions have reserved wholly to the monarch. You have fixed the limits of the military authority and the municipal authority. You have bounded the action, which you have permitted to the latter over the former, to the right of requisition; but never did the letter or the spirit of your decrees authorize the commons in these municipalities to break the officers, to try them, to give orders to the soldiers, to drive them from the posts committed to their guard, to stop them in their marches ordered by the king, or, in a word, to enslave the troops to the caprice of each of the cities or even market towns through which they are to pass."

Such is the character and disposition of the municipal society which is to reclaim the soldiery, to bring them back to true principles of military subordination, and to render them machines in the hands of the supreme power of the country! Such are the distempers of the French troops! Such is their cure! As the army is, so is the navy. The municipalities supersede the orders of the assembly, and the seamen in their turn supersede the orders of the municipalities. From my heart I pity the condition of a respectable servant of the public, like this war-minister, obliged in his old age to pledge the assembly in their civic cups, and to enter with a hoary head into all the fantastic vagaries of these juvenile politicians. Such schemes are not like propositions coming from a man of fifty years wear and tear amongst mankind. They seem rather such as ought to be expected from those grand compounders in politics, who shorten the road to their degrees in the state; and have a certain inward fanatical assurance and illumination upon all subjects; upon the credit of which one of their doctors has thought fit, with great applause, and greater success, to caution the assembly not to attend to old men, or to any persons who valued themselves upon their experience. I suppose all the ministers of state must qualify, and take this test; wholly abjuring the errors and heresies of experience and observation. Every man has his own relish. But I think, if I could not attain to the wisdom, I would at least preserve something of the stiff and peremptory

dignity of age. These gentlemen deal in regeneration; but at any price I should hardly yield my rigid fibres to be regenerated by them; nor begin, in my grand climacteric, to squall in their new accents, or to stammer, in my second cradle, the elemental sounds of their barbarous metaphysics.* *Si isti mihi largiantur ut repueriscam, et in eorum cunis vagiam, valde recusem!*

The imbecility of any part of the puerile and pedantic system, which they call a constitution, cannot be laid open without discovering the utter insufficiency and mischief of every other part with which it comes in contact, or that bears any the remotest relation to it. You cannot propose a remedy for the incompetence of the crown, without displaying the debility of the assembly. You cannot deliberate on the confusion of the army of the state, without disclosing the worse disorders of the armed municipalities. The military lays open the civil, and the civil betrays the military anarchy. I wish every body carefully to peruse the eloquent speech (such it is) of Mons. de la Tour du Pin. He attributes the salvation of the municipalities to the good behavior of some of the troops. These troops are to preserve the well-disposed part of those municipalities, which is confessed to be the weakest, from the pillage of the worse-disposed, which is the strongest. But the municipalities affect a sovereignty, and will command those troops which are necessary for their protection. Indeed they must command them or court them. The municipalities, by the necessity of their situation, and by the republican powers they have obtained, must, with relation to the military, be the masters, or the servants, or the confederates, or each successively; or they must make a jumble of all together, according to circumstances. What government is there to coerce the army but the municipality, or the municipality but the army? To preserve concord where authority is extinguished, at the hazard of all consequences, the assembly attempts to cure the distempers by the distempers them-

* The war-minister has since quitted the school and resigned his office.

selves; and they hope to preserve themselves from a purely military democracy, by giving it a debauched interest in the municipal.

If the soldiers once come to mix for any time in the municipal clubs, cabals and confederacies, an elective attraction will draw them to the lowest and most desperate part. With them will be their habits, affections, and sympathies. The military conspiracies, which are to be remedied by civic confederacies; the rebellious municipalities, which are to be rendered obedient by furnishing them with the means of seducing the very armies of the state that are to keep them in order; all these chimeras of a monstrous and portentous policy, must aggravate the confusion from which they have arisen. There must be blood. The want of common judgment manifested in the construction of all their descriptions of forces, and in all their kinds of civil and judicial authorities, will make it flow. Disorders may be quieted in one time and in one part. They will break out in others; because the evil is radical and intrinsic. All these schemes of mixing mutinous soldiers with seditious citizens, must weaken still more and more the military connection of soldiers with their officers, as well as add military and mutinous audacity to turbulent artificers and peasants. To secure a real army, the officer should be first and last in the eye of the soldier; first and last in his attention, observance and esteem. Officers it seems there are to be, whose chief qualification must be temper and patience. They are to manage their troops by electioneering arts. They must bear themselves as candidates not as commanders. But as by such means power may be occasionally in their hands, the authority by which they are to be nominated becomes of high importance.

What you may do finally does not appear; nor is it of much moment, whilst the strange and contradictory relation between your army and all the parts of your republic, as well as the puzzled relation of those parts to each other and to the whole, remain as they are. You seem to have given the provisional nomination of the officers, in the first instance, to

the king, with a reserve of approbation by the national assembly. Men who have an interest to pursue are extremely sagacious in discovering the true seat of power. They must soon perceive that those who can negative indefinitely, in reality appoint. The officers must therefore look to their intrigues in the assembly, as the sole certain road to promotion. Still, however, by your new constitution they must begin their solicitation at court.

This double negotiation for military rank seems to me a contrivance as well adapted, as if it were studied for no other end, to promote faction in the assembly itself, relative to this vast military patronage; and then to poison the corps of officers with factions of a nature still more dangerous to the safety of government, upon any bottom on which it can be placed, and destructive in the end to the efficiency of the army itself. Those officers, who lose the promotions intended for them by the crown, must become of a faction opposite to that of the assembly which has rejected their claims, and must nourish discontents in the heart of the army against the ruling powers. Those officers, on the other hand, who, by carrying their point through an interest in the assembly, feel themselves to be at best only second in the good will of the crown, though first in that of the assembly, must slight an authority which would not advance and could not retard their promotion. If to avoid these evils you will have no other rule for command or promotion than seniority, you will have an army of formality; at the same time it will become more independent, and more of a military republic. Not they, but the king is the machine. A king is not to be deposed by halves. If he is not every thing in the command of an army, he is nothing. What is the effect of a power placed nominally at the head of the army, who to that army is no object of gratitude, or of fear? Such a cipher is not fit for the administration of an object, of all things the most delicate, the supreme command of military men. They must be constrained (and their inclinations lead them to what their necessities require) by a real, vigorous, effective, decided, personal au-

thority. The authority of the assembly itself suffers by passing through such a debilitating channel as they have chosen. The army will not long look to an assembly acting through the organ of false show, and palpable imposition. They will not seriously yield obedience to a prisoner. They will either despise a pageant, or they will pity a captive king. This relation of your army to the crown will, if I am not greatly mistaken, become a serious dilemma in your politics.

It is besides to be considered, whether an assembly like yours, even supposing that it was in possession of another sort of organ through which its orders were to pass, is fit for promoting the obedience and discipline of an army. It is known, that armies have hitherto yielded a very precarious and uncertain obedience to any senate, or popular authority; and they will least of all yield it to an assembly which is to have only a continuance of two years. The officers must totally lose the characteristic disposition of military men, if they see with perfect submission and due admiration, the dominion of pleaders; especially when they find, that they have a new court to pay to an endless succession of those pleaders; whose military policy, and the genius of whose command (if they should have any) must be as uncertain as their duration is transient. In the weakness of one kind of authority, and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction, until some popular general who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on his personal account. There is no other way of securing military obedience in this state of things. But the moment in which that event shall happen, the person who really commands the army is your master; the master (that is little) of your king, the master of your assembly, the master of your whole republic.

How came the assembly by their present power over the army? Chiefly, to be sure, by debauching the soldiers from their officers. They have begun by a most terrible operation.

They have touched the central point, about which the particles that compose armies are at repose. They have destroyed the principle of obedience in the great essential critical link between the officer and the soldier, just where the chain of military subordination commences, and on which the whole of that system depends. The soldier is told he is a citizen, and has the rights of man and citizen. The right of a man, he is told, is to be his own governor, and to be ruled only by those to whom he delegates that self-government. It is very natural he should think that he ought most of all to have his choice where he is to yield the greatest degree of obedience. He will therefore, in all probability, systematically do, what he does at present occasionally; that is, he will exercise at least a negative in the choice of his officers. At present the officers are known at best to be only permissive, and on their good behavior. In fact, there have been many instances in which they have been cashiered by their corps. Here is a second negative on the choice of the king; a negative as effectual at least as the other of the assembly. The soldiers know already that it has been a question, not ill received in the national assembly, whether they ought not to have the direct choice of their officers, or some proportion of them? When such matters are in deliberation, it is no extravagant supposition that they will incline to the opinion most favorable to their pretensions. They will not bear to be deemed the army of an imprisoned king, whilst another army in the same country, with whom too they are to feast and confederate, is to be considered as the free army of a free constitution. They will cast their eyes on the other and more permanent army; I mean the municipal. That corps, they well know, does actually elect its own officers. They may not be able to discern the grounds of distinction on which they are not to elect a Marquis de la Fayette (or what is his new name) of their own. If this election of a commander in chief be a part of the rights of men, why not of theirs? They see elective justices of peace, elective judges, elective curates, elective bishops, elective municipalities, and elective commanders of the Pa-

risian army. Why should they alone be excluded? Are the brave troops of France the only men in that nation who are not the fit judges of military merit, and of the qualifications necessary for a commander in chief? Are they paid by the state, and do they therefore lose the rights of men? They are a part of that nation themselves, and contribute to that pay. And is not the king, is not the national assembly, and are not all who elect the national assembly, likewise paid? Instead of seeing all these forfeit their rights by their receiving a salary, they perceive that in all these cases a salary is given for the exercise of those rights. All your resolutions, all your proceedings, all your debates, all the works of your doctors in religion and politics, have industriously been put into their hands; and you expect that they will apply to their own case just as much of your doctrines and examples as suits your pleasure.

Every thing depends upon the army in such a government as yours; for you have industriously destroyed all the opinions, and prejudices, and, as far as in you lay, all the instincts which support government. Therefore the moment any difference arises between your national assembly and any part of the nation, you must have recourse to force. Nothing else is left to you; or rather you have left nothing else to yourselves. You see by the report of your war-minister, that the distribution of the army is in a great measure made with a view of internal coercion.* You must rule by an army; and you have infused into that army by which you rule, as well as into the whole body of the nation, principles which after a time must disable you in the use you resolve to make of it. The king is to call out troops to act against his people, when the world has been told, and the assertion is still ringing in our ears, that troops ought not to fire on citizens. The colonies assert to themselves an independent constitution and a free trade. They must be constrained by troops. In what chapter of your code of the rights of men are they able to read, that it is

* Courier François, 30 July, 1790. Assemblée Nationale, Numero 210.

a part of the rights of men to have their commerce monopolized and restrained for the benefit of others? As the colonists rise on you, the negroes rise on them—Troops again—Massacre, torture, hanging! These are your rights of men! These are the fruits of metaphysic declarations wantonly made, and shamefully retracted! It was but the other day that the farmers of land in one of your provinces refused to pay some sorts of rents to the lord of the soil. In consequence of this you decree, that the country people shall pay all rents and dues, except those which as grievances you have abolished; and if they refuse, then you order the king to march troops against them. You lay down metaphysic propositions which infer universal consequences, and then you attempt to limit logic by despotism. The leaders of the present system tell them of their rights, as men, to take fortresses, to murder guards, to seize on kings without the least appearance of authority even from the assembly, whilst, as the sovereign legislative body, that assembly was sitting in the name of the nation—and yet these leaders presume to order out the troops which have acted in these very disorders, to coerce those who shall judge on the principles, and follow the examples, which have been guaranteed by their own approbation.

The leaders teach the people to abhor and reject all feodality as the barbarism of tyranny, and they tell them afterwards how much of that barbarous tyranny they are to bear with patience. As they are prodigal of light with regard to grievances, so the people find them sparing in the extreme with regard to redress. They know that not only certain quit-rents and personal duties, which you have permitted them to redeem (but have furnished no money for the redemption) are as nothing to those burthens for which you have made no provision at all. They know, that almost the whole system of landed property in its origin is feudal; that it is the distribution of the possessions of the original proprietors, made by a barbarous conqueror to his barbarous instruments; and that the most grievous effects of the conquest are the land rents of every kind, as without question they are.

The peasants, in all probability, are the descendants of these ancient proprietors, Romans or Gauls. But if they fail, in any degree, in the titles which they make on the principles of antiquaries and lawyers, they retreat into the citadel of the rights of men. There they find that men are equal; and the earth, the kind and equal mother of all, ought not to be monopolized to foster the pride and luxury of any men, who by nature are no better than themselves, and who, if they do not labor for their bread, are worse. They find, that by the laws of nature the occupant and subduer of the soil is the true proprietor; that there is no prescription against nature; and that the agreements (where any there are) which have been made with their landlords, during the time of slavery, are only the effect of duress and force; and that when the people re-entered into the rights of men, those agreements were made as void, as every thing else which had been settled under the prevalence of the old feudal and aristocratic tyranny. They will tell you that they see no difference between an idler with a hat and a national cockade, and an idler in a cowl or in a rochet. If you ground the title to rents on succession and prescription, they tell you, from the speech of Mr. *Camus*, published by the national assembly for their information, that things ill begun cannot avail themselves of prescription; that the title of these lords was vicious in its origin; and that force is at least as bad as fraud. As to the title by succession, they will tell you, that the succession of those who have cultivated the soil is the true pedigree of property, and not rotten parchments and silly substitutions; that the lords have enjoyed their usurpation too long; and that if they allow to these lay monks any charitable pension, they ought to be thankful to the bounty of the true proprietor, who is so generous towards a false claimant to his goods.

When the peasants give you back that coin of sophistic reason, on which you have set your image and superscription, you cry it down as base money, and tell them you will pay for the future with French guards, and dragoons, and hussars. You hold up, to chastise them, the second-hand au-

thority of a king, who is only the instrument of destroying, without any power of protecting either the people or his own person. Through him it seems you will make yourselves obeyed. They answer, You have taught us that there are no gentlemen; and which of your principles teach us to bow to kings whom we have not elected? We know, without your teaching, that lands were given for the support of feudal dignities, feudal titles, and feudal offices. When you took down the cause as a grievance, why should the more grievous effect remain? As there are now no hereditary honors, and no distinguished families, why are we taxed to maintain what you tell us ought not to exist? You have sent down our old aristocratic landlords in no other character, and with no other title, but that of exactors under your authority. Have you endeavored to make these your rent-gatherers respectable to us? No. You have sent them to us with their arms reversed, their shields broken, their impresses defaced; and so displumed, degraded, and metamorphosed, such unfeathered two-legged things, that we no longer know them. They are strangers to us. They do not even go by the names of our ancient lords. Physically they may be the same men; though we are not quite sure of that, on your new philosophic doctrine of personal identity. In all other respects they are totally changed. We do not see why we have not as good a right to refuse them their rents, as you have to abrogate all their honors, titles, and distinctions. This we have never commissioned you to do; and it is one instance, among many indeed, of your assumption of undelegated power. We see the burghers of Paris, through their clubs, their mobs, and their national guards, directing you at their pleasure, and giving that as law to you, which, under your authority, is transmitted as law to us. Through you, these burghers dispose of the lives and fortunes of us all. Why should you not attend as much to the desires of the laborious husbandman with regard to our rent, by which we are affected in the most serious manner, as you do to the demands of these insolent burghers, relative to distinctions and titles of honor, by which neither they nor we

are affected at all? But we find you pay more regard to their fancies than to our necessities. Is it among the rights of man to pay tribute to his equals? Before this measure of yours, we might have thought we were not perfectly equal. We might have entertained some old habitual, unmeaning prepossession in favor of those landlords; but we cannot conceive with what other view than that of destroying all respect to them, you could have made the law that degrades them. You have forbidden us to treat them with any of the old formalities of respect, and now you send troops to sabre and to bayonet us into a submission to fear and force, which you did not suffer us to yield to the mild authority of opinion.

The ground of some of these arguments is horrid and ridiculous to all rational ears; but to the politicians of metaphysics who have opened schools for sophistry, and made establishments for anarchy, it is solid and conclusive. It is obvious, that on a mere consideration of the right, the leaders in the assembly would not in the least have scrupled to abrogate the rents along with the titles and family ensigns. It would be only to follow up the principle of their reasonings, and to complete the analogy of their conduct. But they had newly possessed themselves of a great body of landed property by confiscation. They had this commodity at market; and the market would have been wholly destroyed, if they were to permit the husbandmen to riot in the speculations with which they so freely intoxicated themselves. The only security which property enjoys in any one of its descriptions, is from the interests of their rapacity with regard to some other. They have left nothing but their own arbitrary pleasure to determine what property is to be protected and what subverted.

Neither have they left any principle by which any of their municipalities can be bound to obedience; or even conscientiously obliged not to separate from the whole to become independent, or to connect itself with some other state. The people of Lyons, it seems, have refused lately to pay taxes. Why should they not? What lawful authority is there left to exact

them? The king imposed some of them. The old states, methodized by orders, settled the more ancient. They may say to the assembly, Who are you, that are not our kings, nor the states we have elected, nor sit on the principles on which we have elected you? And who are we, that when we see the gabelles which you have ordered to be paid, wholly shaken off, when we see the acts of disobedience afterwards ratified by yourselves, who are we, that we are not to judge what taxes we ought or ought not to pay, and are not to avail ourselves of the same powers, the validity of which you have approved in others? To this the answer is, We will send troops. The last reason of kings, is always the first with your assembly. This military aid may serve for a time, whilst the impression of the increase of pay remains, and the vanity of being umpires in all disputes is flattered. But this weapon will snap short, unfaithful to the hand that employs it. The assembly keep a school where, systematically, and with unremitting perseverance, they teach principles, and form regulations destructive to all spirit of subordination, civil and military—and then they expect that they shall hold in obedience an anarchic people by an anarchic army.

The municipal army, which, according to their new policy, is to balance this national army, if considered in itself only, is of a constitution much more simple, and in every respect less exceptionable. It is a mere democratic body, unconnected with the crown or the kingdom; armed, and trained, and officered at the pleasure of the districts to which the corps severally belong; and the personal service of the individuals, who compose, or the fine in lieu of personal service, are directed by the same authority.* Nothing is more uniform. If, however, considered in any relation to the

*I see by Mr. Necker's account, that the national guards of Paris have received, over and above the money levied within their own city, about £145,000 sterling out of the public treasure. Whether this be an actual payment for the nine months of their existence, or an estimate of their yearly charge, I do not clearly perceive. It is of no great importance, as certainly they may take whatever they please.

crown, to the national assembly, to the public tribunals, or to the other army, or considered in a view to any coherence or connection between its parts, it seems a monster, and can hardly fail to terminate its perplexed movements in some great national calamity. It is a worse preservative of a general constitution, than the systasis of Crete, or the confederation of Poland, or any other ill-devised corrective which has yet been imagined, in the necessities produced by an ill-constructed system of government.

Having concluded my few remarks on the constitution of the supreme power, the executive, the judicature, the military, and on the reciprocal relation of all these establishments, I shall say something of the ability shewed by your legislators with regard to the revenue.

In their proceedings relative to this object, if possible, still fewer traces appear of political judgment or financial resource. When the states met, it seemed to be the great object to improve the system of revenue, to enlarge its collection, to cleanse it of oppression and vexation, and to establish it on the most solid footing. Great were the expectations entertained on that head throughout Europe. It was by this grand arrangement that France was to stand or fall; and this became, in my opinion, very properly, the test by which the skill and patriotism of those who ruled in that assembly would be tried. The revenue of the state is the state. In effect, all depends upon it, whether for support or for reformation. The dignity of every occupation wholly depends upon the quantity and the kind of virtue that may be exerted in it. As all great qualities of the mind which operate in public, and are not merely suffering and passive, require force for their display, I had almost said, for their unequivocal existence, the revenue, which is the spring of all power, becomes in its administration the sphere of every active virtue. Public virtue, being of a nature magnificent and splendid, instituted for great things, and conversant about great concerns, requires abundant scope and room, and cannot spread and grow under confinement, and in circumstances straitened,

narrow, and sordid. Through the revenue alone the body politic can act in its true genius and character, and therefore it will display just as much of its collective virtue, and as much of that virtue which may characterize those who move it, and are, as it were, its life and guiding principle, as it is possessed of a just revenue. For from hence not only magnanimity, and liberality, and beneficence, and fortitude, and providence, and the tutelary protection of all good arts, derive their food, and the growth of their organs, but continence, and self-denial, and labor, and vigilance, and frugality, and whatever else there is in which the mind shews itself above the appetite, are nowhere more in their proper element than in the provision and distribution of the public wealth. It is therefore not without reason that the science of speculative and practical finance, which must take to its aid so many auxiliary branches of knowledge, stands high in the estimation not only of the ordinary sort, but of the wisest and best men; and as this science has grown with the progress of its object, the prosperity and improvement of nations has generally increased with the increase of their revenues; and they will both continue to grow and flourish, as long as the balance between what is left to strengthen the efforts of individuals, and what is collected for the common efforts of the state, bear to each other a due reciprocal proportion, and are kept in a close correspondence and communication. And perhaps it may be owing to the greatness of revenues, and to the urgency of state necessities, that old abuses in the constitution of finances are discovered, and their true nature and rational theory comes to be more perfectly understood; insomuch, that a smaller revenue might have been more distressing in one period than a far greater is found to be in another; the proportionate wealth even remaining the same. In this state of things, the French assembly found something in their revenues to preserve, to secure, and wisely to administer, as well as to abrogate and alter. Though their proud assumption might justify the severest tests, yet in trying their abilities on their financial proceedings, I would only

consider what is the plain obvious duty of a common finance minister, and try them upon that, and not upon models of ideal perfection.

The objects of a financier are, then, to secure an ample revenue; to impose it with judgment and equality; to employ it economically; and when necessity obliges him to make use of credit, to secure its foundations in that instance, and for ever, by the clearness and candor of his proceedings, the exactness of his calculations, and the solidity of his funds. On these heads we may take a short and distinct view of the merits and abilities of those in the national assembly, who have taken to themselves the management of this arduous concern. Far from any increase of revenue in their hands, I find, by a report of M. Vernier, from the committee of finances, of the second of August last, that the amount of the national revenue, as compared with its produce before the revolution, was diminished by the sum of two hundred millions, or *eight millions sterling* of the annual income, considerably more than one third of the whole.

If this be the result of great ability, never surely was ability displayed in a more distinguished manner, or with so powerful an effect. No common folly, no vulgar incapacity, no ordinary official negligence, even no official crime, no corruption, no peculation, hardly any direct hostility which we have seen in the modern world, could in so short a time have made so complete an overthrow of the finances, and with them, of the strength of a great kingdom.—*Cedò qui vestram rempublicam tantam amisistis tam cito?*

The sophisters and declaimers, as soon as the assembly met, began with decrying the ancient constitution of the revenue in many of its most essential branches, such as the public monopoly of salt. They charged it, as truly as unwisely, with being ill-contrived, oppressive, and partial. This representation they were not satisfied to make use of in speeches preliminary to some plan of reform; they declared it in a solemn resolution or public sentence, as it were judicially, passed upon it; and this they dispersed throughout

the nation. At the time they passed the decree, with the same gravity they ordered this same absurd, oppressive, and partial tax to be paid, until they could find a revenue to replace it. The consequence was inevitable. The provinces which had been always exempted from this salt monopoly, some of whom were charged with other contributions, perhaps equivalent, were totally disinclined to bear any part of the burthen, which by an equal distribution was to redeem the others. As to the assembly, occupied as it was with the declaration and violation of the rights of men, and with their arrangements for general confusion, it had neither leisure nor capacity to contrive, nor authority to enforce any plan of any kind relative to the replacing the tax or equalizing it, or compensating the provinces, or for conducting their minds to any scheme of accommodation with the other districts which were to be relieved.

The people of the salt provinces, impatient under taxes damned by the authority which had directed their payment, very soon found their patience exhausted. They thought themselves as skilful in demolishing as the assembly could be. They relieved themselves by throwing off the whole burthen. Animated by this example, each district, or part of a district, judging of its own grievance by its own feeling, and of its remedy by its own opinion, did as it pleased with other taxes.

We are next to see how they have conducted themselves in contriving equal impositions, proportioned to the means of the citizens, and the least likely to lean heavy on the active capital employed in the generation of that private wealth, from whence the public fortune must be derived. By suffering the several districts, and several of the individuals in each district, to judge of what part of the old revenue they might withhold, instead of better principles of equality, a new inequality was introduced of the most oppressive kind. Payments were regulated by dispositions. The parts of the kingdom which were the most submissive, the most orderly, or the most affectionate to the commonwealth, bore the whole

burthen of the state. Nothing turns out to be so oppressive and unjust as a feeble government. To fill up all the deficiencies in the old impositions, and the new deficiencies of every kind which were to be expected, what remained to a state without authority? The national assembly called for a voluntary benevolence; for a fourth part of the income of all the citizens, to be estimated on the honor of those who were to pay. They obtained something more than could be rationally calculated, but what was, far indeed, from answerable to their real necessities, and much less to their fond expectations. Rational people could have hoped for little from this their tax in the disguise of a benevolence; a tax weak, ineffective, and unequal; a tax by which luxury, avarice, and selfishness were screened, and the load thrown upon productive capital, upon integrity, generosity, and public spirit—a tax of regulation upon virtue. At length the mask is thrown off, and they are now trying means (with little success) of exacting their benevolence by force.

This benevolence, the rickety offspring of weakness, was to be supported by another resource, the twin brother of the same prolific imbecility. The patriotic donations were to make good the failure of the patriotic contribution. John Doe was to become security for Richard Roe. By this scheme they took things of much price from the giver, comparatively of small value to the receiver; they ruined several trades; they pillaged the crown of its ornaments, the churches of their plate, and the people of their personal decorations. The invention of these juvenile pretenders to liberty, was in reality nothing more than a servile imitation of one of the poorest resources of doting despotism. They took an old huge full-bottomed perriwig out of the wardrobe of the antiquated frippery of Louis the Fourteenth, to cover the premature baldness of the national assembly. They produced this old fashioned formal folly, though it had been so abundantly exposed in the Memoirs of the Duke de St. Simon, if to reasonable men it had wanted any arguments to display its mischief and insufficiency. A device of the same kind was tried in my memory

by Louis the Fifteenth, but it answered at no time. However, the necessities of ruinous wars were some excuse for desperate projects. The deliberations of calamity are rarely wise. But here was a season for disposition and providence. It was in a time of profound peace, then enjoyed for five years, and promising a much longer continuance, that they had recourse to this desperate trifling. They were sure to lose more reputation by sporting, in their serious situation, with these toys and playthings of finance, which have filled half their journals, than could possibly be compensated by the poor temporary supply which they afforded. It seemed as if those who adopted such projects were wholly ignorant of their circumstances, or wholly unequal to their necessities. Whatever virtue may be in these devices, it is obvious that neither the patriotic gifts, nor the patriotic contribution, can ever be resorted to again. The resources of public folly are soon exhausted. The whole indeed of their scheme of revenue is to make, by any artifice, an appearance of a full reservoir for the hour, whilst at the same time they cut off the springs and living fountains of perennial supply. The account not long since furnished by Mr. Necker was meant, without question, to be favorable. He gives a flattering view of the means of getting through the year; but he expresses, as it is natural he should, some apprehension for that which was to succeed. On this last prognostic, instead of entering into the grounds of this apprehension, in order by a proper foresight, to prevent the prognosticated evil, Mr. Necker receives a sort of friendly reprimand from the president of the assembly.

As to their other schemes of taxation, it is impossible to say any thing of them with certainty, because they have not yet had their operation; but nobody is so sanguine as to imagine they will fill up any perceptible part of the wide gaping breach which their incapacity has made in their revenues. At present the state of their treasury sinks every day more and more in cash, and swells more and more in fictitious representation. When so little within or without is now found but

paper, the representative not of opulence but of want, the creature not of credit but of power, they imagine that our flourishing state in England is owing to that bank-paper, and not the bank-paper to the flourishing condition of our commerce, to the solidity of our credit, and to the total exclusion of all idea of power from any part of the transaction. They forget that, in England, not one shilling of paper-money of any description is received but of choice; that the whole has had its origin in cash actually deposited; and that it is convertible, at pleasure, in an instant, and without the smallest loss, into cash again. Our paper is of value in commerce, because in law it is of none. It is powerful on 'Change, because in Westminster-hall it is impotent. In payment of a debt of twenty shillings, a creditor may refuse all the paper of the bank of England. Nor is there amongst us a single public security, of any quality or nature whatsoever, that is enforced by authority. In fact it might be easily shewn, that our paper wealth, instead of lessening the real coin, has a tendency to increase it; instead of being a substitute for money, it only facilitates its entry, its exit, and its circulation; that it is the symbol of prosperity, and not the badge of distress. Never was a scarcity of cash, and an exuberance of paper, a subject of complaint in this nation.

Well! but a lessening of prodigal expenses, and the economy which has been introduced by the virtuous and sapient assembly, make amends for the losses sustained in the receipt of revenue. In this at least they have fulfilled the duty of a financier. Have those, who say so, looked at the expenses of the national assembly itself? of the municipalities? of the city of Paris? of the increased pay of the two armies? of the new police? of the new judicatures? Have they even carefully compared the present pension-list with the former? These politicians have been cruel, not economical. Comparing the expenses of the former prodigal government and its relation to the then revenues with the expenses of this new system as opposed to the state of its new treasury, I believe

the present will be found beyond all comparison more chargeable.*

It remains only to consider the proofs of financial ability, furnished by the present French managers when they are to raise supplies on credit. Here I am little at a stand; for credit, properly speaking, they have none. The credit of the ancient government was not indeed the best; but they could always, on some terms, command money, not only at home, but from most of the countries of Europe where a surplus capital was accumulated; and the credit of that government was improving daily. The establishment of a system of liberty would of course be supposed to give it new strength; and so it would actually have done, if a system of liberty had been established. What offers has their government of pretended liberty, had from Holland, from Hamburgh, from Switzerland, from Genoa, from England, for a dealing in their paper? Why should these nations of commerce and economy enter into any pecuniary dealings with a people, who attempt to reverse the very nature of things; amongst whom they see the debtor prescribing, at the point of the bayonet, the medium of his solvency to the creditor; discharging one of his engagements with another; turning his very penury into his resource; and paying his interest with his rags?

Their fanatical confidence in the omnipotence of church

* The reader will observe, that I have but lightly touched (my plan demanded nothing more) on the condition of the French Finances, as connected with the demands upon them. If I had intended to do otherwise, the materials in my hands for such a task are not altogether perfect. On this subject I refer the reader to M. de Calonne's work; and the tremendous display that he has made of the havoc and devastation in the public estate, and in all the affairs of France, caused by the presumptuous good intentions of ignorance and incapacity. Such effects, those causes will always produce. Looking over that account with a pretty strict eye, and, with perhaps too much rigor, deducting every thing which may be placed to the account of a financier out of place, who might be supposed by his enemies desirous of making the most of his cause, I believe it will be found, that a more salutary lesson of caution against the daring spirit of innovators than what has been supplied at the expense of France, never was at any time furnished to mankind.

plunder, has induced these philosophers to overlook all care of the public estate, just as the dream of the philosopher's stone induces dupes, under the more plausible delusion of the hermetic art, to neglect all rational means for improving their fortunes. With these philosophic financiers, this universal medicine made of church mummy is to cure all the evils of the state. These gentlemen perhaps do not believe a great deal in the miracles of piety; but it cannot be questioned, that they have an undoubting faith in the prodigies of sacrilege. Is there a debt which presses them—Issue *assignats*. Are compensations to be made, or a maintenance decreed to those whom they have robbed of their freehold in their office, or expelled from their profession—*Assignats*. Is a fleet to be fitted out—*Assignats*. If sixteen millions sterling of these *assignats*, forced on the people, leave the wants of the state as urgent as ever—issue, says one, thirty millions sterling of *assignats*—says another, issue fourscore millions more of *assignats*. The only difference among their financial factions is on the greater or the lesser quantity of *assignats* to be imposed on the public sufferance. They are all professors of *assignats*. Even those, whose natural good sense and knowledge of commerce, not obliterated by philosophy, furnish decisive arguments against this delusion conclude their arguments, by proposing the emission of *assignats*. I suppose they must talk of *assignats*, as no other language would be understood. All experience of their inefficacy does not in the least discourage them. Are the old *assignats* depreciated at market? What is the remedy? Issue new *assignats*.—*Mais si maladia, opiniatria, non vult se garire, quid illi facere? assignare—postea assignare; ensuita assignare.* The word is a trifle altered. The Latin of your present doctors may be better than that of your old comedy; their wisdom, and the variety of their resources, are the same. They have not more notes in their song than the cuckoo; though, far from the softness of that harbinger of summer and plenty, their voice is as harsh and as ominous as that of the raven.

Who but the most desperate adventurers in philosophy and

finance could at all have thought of destroying the settled revenue of the state, the sole security for the public credit, in the hope of rebuilding it with the materials of confiscated property? If, however, an excessive zeal for the state should have led a pious and venerable prelate (by anticipation a father of the church*) to pillage his own order, and, for the good of the church and people, to take upon himself the place of grand financier of confiscation, and comptroller general of sacrilege, he and his coadjutors were, in my opinion, bound to shew, by their subsequent conduct, that they knew something of the office they assumed. When they had resolved to appropriate to the *Fisc*, a certain portion of the landed property of their conquered country, it was their business to render their bank a real fund of credit; as far as such a bank was capable of becoming so.

To establish a current circulating credit upon any *Land-bank*, under any circumstances whatsoever, has hitherto proved difficult at the very least. The attempt has commonly ended in bankruptcy. But when the assembly were led, through a contempt of moral, to a defiance of economical principles, it might at least have been expected, that nothing would be omitted on their part to lessen this difficulty, to prevent any aggravation of this bankruptcy. It might be expected, that to render your *Land-bank* tolerable, every means would be adopted that could display openness and candor in the statement of the security; every thing which could aid the recovery of the demand. To take things in their most favorable point of view, your condition was that of a man of a large landed estate, which he wished to dispose of for the discharge of a debt, and the supply of certain services. Not being able instantly to sell, you wished to mortgage. What would a man of fair intentions, and a commonly clear understanding, do in such circumstances? Ought he not first to ascertain the gross value of the estate; the charges of its management and disposition; the encumbrances

* La Bruyere of Bossuet.

perpetual and temporary of all kinds that affect it; then, striking a net surplus, to calculate the just value of the security? When that surplus (the only security to the creditor) had been clearly ascertained, and properly vested in the hands of trustees; then he would indicate the parcels to be sold, and the time and conditions of sale; after this, he would admit the public creditor, if he chose it, to subscribe his stock into this new fund; or he might receive proposals for an *assignat* from those who would advance money to purchase this species of security.

This would be to proceed like men of business, methodically and rationally; and on the only principles of public and private credit that have an existence. The dealer would then know exactly what he purchased; and the only doubt which could hang upon his mind would be, the dread of the resumption of the spoil, which one day might be made (perhaps with an addition of punishment) from the sacrilegious gripe of those execrable wretches who could become purchasers at the auction of their innocent fellow-citizens.

An open and exact statement of the clear value of the property, and of the time, the circumstances, and the place of sale, were all necessary, to efface as much as possible the stigma that has hitherto been branded on every kind of Land-bank. It became necessary on another principle, that is, on account of a pledge of faith previously given on that subject, that their future fidelity in a slippery concern might be established by their adherence to their first engagement. When they had finally determined on a state resource from church booty, they came, on the 14th of April, 1790, to a solemn resolution on the subject; and pledged themselves to their country, "that in the statement of the public charges for each year, there should be brought to account a sum sufficient for defraying the expenses of the R. C. A. religion, the support of the ministers at the altars, the relief of the poor, the pensions to the ecclesiastics, secular, as well as regular, of the one and of the other sex, *in order that the estates and goods which are at the disposal of the nation may be disengaged of*

all charges, and employed by the representatives, or the legislative body, to the great and most pressing exigences of the state." They further engaged, on the same day, that the sum necessary for the year 1791 should be forthwith determined.

In this resolution they admit it their duty to shew distinctly the expense of the above objects, which, by other resolutions, they had before engaged should be first in the order of provision. They admit that they ought to shew the estate clear and disengaged of all charges, and that they should shew it immediately. Have they done this immediately, or at any time? Have they ever furnished a rent-roll of the immovable estates, or given in an inventory of the movable effects which they confiscate to their assignats? In what manner they can fulfil their engagements of holding out to public service "an estate disengaged of all charges," without authenticating the value of the estate, or the quantum of the charges, I leave it to their English admirers to explain. Instantly upon this assurance, and previously to any one step towards making it good, they issue, on the credit of so handsome a declaration, sixteen millions sterling of their paper. This was manly. Who, after this masterly stroke, can doubt of their abilities in finance? But then, before any other emission of these financial *indulgences*, they took care at least to make good their original promise! If such estimate, either of the value of the estate or the amount of the incumbrances, has been made, it has escaped me. I never heard of it.

At length they have spoken out, and they have made a full discovery of their abominable fraud, in holding out the church lands as security for any debts or any service whatsoever. They rob only to enable them to cheat; but in a very short time they defeat the ends both of the robbery and the fraud, by making out accounts for other purposes, which blow up their whole apparatus of force and of deception. I am obliged to M. de Calonne for his reference to the document which proves this extraordinary fact: it had by some means escaped me. Indeed it was not necessary to make out my assertion as to the breach of faith on the declaration of

the 14th of April, 1790. By a report of their committee it now appears, that the charge of keeping up the reduced ecclesiastical establishments, and other expenses attendant on religion, and maintaining the religious of both sexes, retained or pensioned, and the other concomitant expenses of the same nature, which they have brought upon themselves by this convulsion in property, exceeds the income of the estates acquired by it in the enormous sum of two millions sterling annually; besides a debt of seven millions and upwards. These are the calculating powers of imposture! This is the finance of philosophy! This is the result of all the delusions held out to engage a miserable people in rebellion, murder, and sacrilege, and to make them prompt and zealous instruments in the ruin of their country! Never did a state, in any case, enrich itself by the confiscations of the citizens. This new experiment has succeeded like all the rest. Every honest mind, every true lover of liberty and humanity, must rejoice to find that injustice is not always good policy, nor rapine the high road to riches. I subjoin with pleasure, in a note, the able and spirited observations of M. de Calonne on this subject.*

* "Ce n'est point à l'assemblée entière que je m'adresse ici; je ne parle qu'à ceux qui l'égarent, en lui cachant sous des gazes séduisantes le but où ils l'entraînent. C'est à eux que je dis: votre objet, vous n'en disconviendrez pas, c'est d'ôter tout espoir au clergé, et de consommer sa ruine; c'est-là, en ne vous soupçonnant d'aucune combinaison de cupidité, d'aucun regard le jeu des effets publics, c'est-là ce qu'on droit croire que vous avez en vue dans la terrible opération que vous proposez; c'est ce qui doit en être le fruit. Mais le peuple qui vous y intéressez, quel avantage peut-il y trouver? En vous servant sans cesse de lui, que faites-vous pour lui? Rien, absolument rien; et, au contraire, vous faites ce qui ne conduit qu'à l'accabler de nouvelles charges. Vous avez rejeté, à son préjudice, une offre de 400 millions, dont l'acceptation pouvoit devenir un moyen de soulagement en sa faveur; et à cette ressource, aussi profitable que legitime, vous avez substitué une injustice ruineuse, qui, de votre propre aveu, charge le trésor public, et par conséquent le peuple, d'un surcroît de dépense annuelle de 50 millions au moins, et d'un remboursement de 150 millions.

"Malheureux peuple! voilà ce que vous vaut en dernier résultat l'expropriation d'Eglise, et la dureté des décrets taxateurs du traitement des ministres d'une religion bienfaisante; désormais ils seront à votre charge: leurs charité soulageoient les pauvres; et vous allez être imposés pour subvenir à leur entretien!" *De l'Etat de la France*, p. 81. See also p. 92, and the following pages.

In order to persuade the world of the bottomless resource of ecclesiastical confiscation, the assembly have proceeded to other confiscations of estates in offices, which could not be done with any common color without being compensated out of this grand confiscation of landed property. They have thrown upon this fund, which was to shew a surplus, disengaged of all charges, a new charge; namely, the compensation to the whole body of the disbanded judicature; and of all suppressed offices and estates; a charge which I cannot ascertain, but which unquestionably amounts to many French millions. Another of the new charges, is an annuity of four hundred and eighty thousand pounds sterling, to be paid (if they choose to keep faith) by daily payments, for the interest of the first assignats. Have they ever given themselves the trouble to state fairly the expense of the management of the church lands in the hands of the municipalities, to whose care, skill, and diligence, and that of their legion of unknown under agents, they have chosen to commit the charge of the forfeited estates, and the consequence of which had been so ably pointed out by the bishop of Nancy?

But it is unnecessary to dwell on these obvious heads of incumbrance. Have they made out any clear state of the grand incumbrance of all, I mean the whole of the general and municipal establishments of all sorts, and compared it with the regular income by revenue? Every deficiency in these becomes a charge on the confiscated estate, before the creditor can plant his cabbages on an acre of church property. There is no other prop than this confiscation to keep the whole state from tumbling to the ground. In this situation they have purposely covered all that they ought industriously to have cleared, with a thick fog; and then, blindfold themselves, like bulls that shut their eyes when they push, they drive, by the point of the bayonets, their slaves, blindfolded indeed no worse than their lords, to take their fictions for currencies, and to swallow down paper pills by thirty-four millions sterling at a dose. Then they proudly lay in their claim to a future credit, on failure of all their past engage-

ments, and at a time when (if in such a matter any thing can be clear) it is clear that the surplus estates will never answer even the first of their mortgages, I mean that of the four hundred millions (or sixteen millions sterling) of *assignats*. In all this procedure I can discern neither the solid sense of plain dealing, nor the subtle dexterity of ingenious fraud. The objection within the assembly to pulling up the floodgates for this inundation of fraud, are unanswered; but they are thoroughly refuted by an hundred thousand financiers in the street. These are the numbers by which the metaphysic arithmeticians compute. These are the grand calculations on which a philosophical public credit is founded in France. They cannot raise supplies; but they can raise mobs. Let them rejoice in the applauses of the club at Dundee, for their wisdom and patriotism in having thus applied the plunder of the citizens to the service of the state. I hear of no address upon this subject from the directors of the bank of England; though their approbation would be of a *little* more weight in the scale of credit than that of the club at Dundee. But, to do justice to the club, I believe the gentlemen who compose it to be wiser than they appear; that they will be less liberal of their money than of their addresses; and that they would not give a dog's ear of their most rumpled and ragged Scotch paper for twenty of your fairest assignats.

Early in this year the assembly issued paper to the amount of sixteen millions sterling. What must have been the state into which the assembly has brought your affairs, that the relief afforded by so vast a supply has been hardly perceptible? This paper also felt an almost immediate depreciation of five per cent. which in a little time came to about seven. The effect of these assignats on the receipt of the revenue is remarkable. Mr. Necker found that the collectors of the revenue, who received in coin, paid the treasury in *assignats*. The collectors made seven per cent. by thus receiving in money, and accounting in depreciated paper. It was not very difficult to foresee, that this must be inevitable. It was, however, not the less embarrassing. Mr.

Necker was obliged (I believe, for a considerable part, in the market of London,) to buy gold and silver for the mint, which amounted to about twelve thousand pounds above the value of the commodity gained. That minister was of opinion, that whatever their secret nutritive virtue might be, the state could not live upon *assignats* alone; that some real silver was necessary, particularly for the satisfaction of those, who, having iron in their hands, were not likely to distinguish themselves for patience, when they should perceive that whilst an increase of pay was held out to them in real money, it was again to be fraudulently drawn back by depreciated paper. The minister, in this very natural distress, applied to the assembly, that they should order the collectors to pay in specie what in specie they had received. It could not escape him, that if the treasury paid three per cent. for the use of a currency, which should be returned seven per cent. worse than the minister issued it, such a dealing could not very greatly tend to enrich the public. The assembly took no notice of his recommendation. They were in this dilemma—If they continued to receive the assignats, cash must become an alien to their treasury: if the treasury should refuse those paper *amulets*, or should discountenance them in any degree, they must destroy the credit of their sole resource. They seem then to have made their option; and to have given some sort of credit to their paper by taking it themselves; at the same time in their speeches they made a sort of swaggering declaration, something, I rather think, above legislative competence; that is, that there is no difference in value between metallic money and their assignats. This was a good stout proof article of faith, pronounced under an anathema, by the venerable fathers of this philosophic synod. *Credat* who will—certainly not *Judæus Apella.*

A noble indignation rises in the minds of your popular leaders, on hearing the magic lantern in their shew of finance compared to the fraudulent exhibitions of Mr. Law. They cannot bear to hear the sands of his Mississippi com-

pared with the rock of the church, on which they build their system. Pray let them suppress this glorius spirit, until they shew to the world what piece of solid ground there is for their assignats, which they have not preoccupied by other charges. They do injustice to that great, mother fraud, to compare it with their degenerate imitation. It is not true that Law built solely on a speculation concerning the Mississippi. He added the East India trade; he added the African trade; he added the farms of all the farmed revenue of France. All these together unquestionably could not support the structure which the public enthusiasm, not he, chose to build upon these bases. But these were, however, in comparison, generous delusions. They supposed, and they aimed at an increase of the commerce of France. They opened to it the whole range of the two hemispheres. They did not think of feeding France from its own substance. A grand imagination found in this flight of commerce something to captivate. It was wherewithal to dazzle the eye of an eagle. It was not made to entice the smell of a mole, nuzzling and burying himself in his mother earth, as yours is. Men were not then quite shrunk from their natural dimensions by a degrading and sordid philosophy, and fitted for low and vulgar deceptions. Above all remember, that in imposing on the imagination, the then managers of the system made a compliment to the freedom of men. In their fraud there was no mixture of force. This was reserved to our time, to quench the little glimmerings of reason which might break in upon the solid darkness of this enlightened age.

On recollection, I have said nothing of a scheme of finance which may be urged in favor of the abilities of these gentlemen, and which has been introduced with great pomp, though not yet finally adopted in the national assembly. It comes with something solid in aid of the credit of the paper circulation; and much has been said of its utility and its elegance. I mean the project for coining into money the bells of the suppressed churches. This is their alchymy. There are some follies which baffle argument; which go beyond ridi-

cule; and which excite no feeling in us but disgust; and therefore I say no more upon it.

It is as little worth remarking any farther upon all their drawing and re-drawing, on their circulation for putting off the evil day, on the play between the treasury and the *Caisse d'Escompte*, and on all these old exploded contrivances of mercantile fraud, now exalted into policy of state. The revenue will not be trifled with. The prattling about the rights of men will not be accepted in payment for a biscuit or a pound of gunpowder. Here then the metaphysicians descend from their airy speculations, and faithfully follow examples. What examples? The examples of bankrupts. But defeated, baffled, disgraced, when their breath, their strength, their inventions, their fancies desert them, their confidence still maintains its ground. In the manifest failure of their abilities, they take credit for their benevolence. When the revenue disappears in their hands, they have the presumption, in some of their late proceedings, to value *themselves* on the relief given to the people. They did not relieve the people. If they entertained such intentions, why did they order the obnoxious taxes to be paid? The people relieved themselves in spite of the assembly.

But waving all discussion on the parties who may claim the merit of this fallacious relief, has there been, in effect, any relief to the people in any form? Mr. Bailly, one of the grand agents of paper circulation, lets you into the nature of this relief. His speech to the national assembly contained a high and labored panegyric on the inhabitants of Paris for the constancy and unbroken resolution with which they have borne their distress and misery. A fine picture of public felicity! What! great courage and unconquerable firmness of mind to endure benefits, and sustain redress! One would think from the speech of this learned lord mayor, that the Parisians, for this twelvemonth past, had been suffering the straits of some dreadful blockade; that Henry the Fourth had been stopping up the avenues to their supply, and Sully thundering with his ordnance at the gates of Paris; when in

reality they are besieged by no other enemies than their own madness and folly, their own credulity and perverseness. But Mr. Bailly will sooner thaw the eternal ice of his atlantic regions, than restore the central heat to Paris, whilst it remains "smitten with the cold, dry, petrific mace" of a false and unfeeling philosophy. Some time after this speech, that is, on the thirteenth of last August, the same magistrate, giving an account of his government at the bar of the same assembly, expresses himself as follows: "In the month of July, 1789," [the period of everlasting commemoration] "the finances of the city of Paris were *yet* in good order; the expenditure was counterbalanced by the receipt, and she had at that time a million" [forty thousand pounds sterling] "in bank. The expenses which she has been constrained to incur, *subsequent to the revolution*, amount to 2,500,000 livres. From these expenses, and the great falling off in the product of the *free gifts*, not only a momentary, but a *total* want of money has taken place." This is the Paris, upon whose nourishment, in the course of the last year, such immense sums, drawn from the vitals of all France, have been expended. As long as Paris stands in the place of ancient Rome, so long she will be maintained by the subject provinces. It is an evil inevitably attendant on the dominion of sovereign democratic republics. As it happened in Rome, it may survive that republican domination which gave rise to it. In that case despotism itself must submit to the vices of popularity. Rome, under her emperors, united the evils of both systems; and this unnatural combination was one great cause of her ruin.

To tell the people that they are relieved by the dilapidation of their public estate, is a cruel and insolent imposition. Statesmen, before they valued themselves on the relief given to the people by the destruction of their revenue, ought first to have carefully attended to the solution of this problem:—Whether it be more advantageous to the people to pay considerably, and to gain in proportion; or to gain little or nothing, and to be disburthened of all contribution? My

mind is made up to decide in favor of the first proposition. Experience is with me, and, I believe, the best opinions also. To keep a balance between the power of acquisition on the part of the subject, and the demands he is to answer on the part of the state, is a fundamental part of the skill of a true politician. The means of acquisition are prior in time and in arrangement. Good order is the foundation of all good things. To be enabled to acquire, the people, without being servile, must be tractable and obedient. The magistrate must have his reverence, the laws their authority. The body of the people must not find the principles of natural subordination by art rooted out of their minds. They must respect that property of which they cannot partake. They must labor to obtain what by labor can be obtained; and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportioned to the endeavor, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportions of eternal justice. Of this consolation whoever deprives them, deadens their industry, and strikes at the root of all acquisition as of all conservation. He that does this is the cruel oppressor, the merciless enemy of the poor and wretched; at the same time that by his wicked speculations he exposes the fruits of successful industry, and the accumulations of fortune, to the plunder of the negligent, the disappointed, and the unprosperous.

Too many of the financiers by profession are apt to see nothing in revenue but banks, and circulations, and annuities on lives, and tontines, and perpetual rents, and all the small wares of the shop. In a settled order of the state, these things are not to be slighted, nor is the skill in them to be held of trivial estimation. They are good, but then only good, when they assume the effects of that settled order, and are built upon it. But when men think that these beggarly contrivances may supply a resource for the evils which result from breaking up the foundations of public order, and from causing or suffering the principles of property to be subverted, they will, in the ruin of their country, leave a melancholy and lasting monument of the effect of preposterous

politics, and presumptuous, short-sighted, narrow-minded wisdom.

The effects of the incapacity shewn by the popular leaders in all the great members of the commonwealth are to be covered with the "all-atoning name" of liberty. In some people I see great liberty indeed; in many, if not in the most, an oppressive degrading servitude. But what is liberty without wisdom, and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition or restraint. Those who know what virtuous liberty is, cannot bear to see it disgraced by incapable heads, on account of their having high-sounding words in their mouths. Grand, swelling sentiments of liberty, I am sure I do not despise. They warm the heart; they enlarge and liberalize our minds; they animate our courage in a time of conflict. Old as I am, I read the fine raptures of Lucan and Corneille with pleasure. Neither do I wholly condemn the little arts and devices of popularity. They facilitate the carrying of many points of moment; they keep the people together; they refresh the mind in its exertions; and they diffuse occasional gaiety over the severe brow of moral freedom. Every politician ought to sacrifice to the graces; and to join compliance with reason. But in such an undertaking as that in France, all these subsidiary sentiments and artifices are of little avail. To make a government requires no great prudence. Settle the seat of power; teach obedience: and the work is done. To give freedom is still more easy. It is not necessary to guide; it only requires to let go the rein. But to form a *free government;* that is, to temper together these opposite elements of liberty and restraint in one consistent work, requires much thought, deep reflection, a sagacious, powerful, and combining mind. This I do not find in those who take the lead in the national assembly. Perhaps they are not so miserably deficient as they appear. I rather believe it. It would put them below the common level of human understanding. But when the leaders choose to make themselves bidders at an auction of popularity, their talents, in the construction of the

state, will be of no service. They will become flatterers instead of legislators; the instruments, not the guides of the people. If any of them should happen to propose a scheme of liberty, soberly limited, and defined with proper qualifications, he will be immediately outbid by his competitors, who will produce something more splendidly popular. Suspicions will be raised of his fidelity to his cause. Moderation will be stigmatized as the virtue of cowards; and compromise as the prudence of traitors; until, in hopes of preserving the credit which may enable him to temper and moderate on some occasions, the popular leader is obliged to become active in propagating doctrines, and establishing powers, that will afterwards defeat any sober purpose at which he ultimately might have aimed.

But am I so unreasonable as to see nothing at all that deserves commendation in the indefatigable labors of this assembly? I do not deny that among an infinite number of acts of violence and folly, some good may have been done. They who destroy every thing certainly will remove some grievance. They who make every thing new, have a chance that they may establish something beneficial. To give them credit for what they have done in virtue of the authority they have usurped, or to excuse them in the crimes by which that authority has been acquired, it must appear, that the same things could not have been accomplished without producing such a revolution. Most assuredly they might; because almost every one of the regulations made by them, which is not very equivocal, was either in the cession of the king, voluntarily made at the meeting of the states, or in the concurrent instructions to the orders. Some usages have been abolished on just grounds; but they were such, that if they had stood as they were to all eternity, they would little detract from the happiness and prosperity of any state. The improvements of the national assembly are superficial, their errors fundamental.

Whatever they are, I wish my countrymen rather to recommend to our neighbors the example of the British constitution,

than to take models from them for the improvement of our own. In the former they have got an invaluable treasure. They are not, I think, without some causes of apprehension and complaint; but these they do not owe to their constitution, but to their own conduct. I think our happy situation owing to our constitution; but owing to the whole of it, and not to any part singly; owing in a great measure to what we have left standing in our several reviews and reformations, as well as to what we have altered or superadded. Our people will find employment enough for a truly patriotic, free, and independent spirit, in guarding what they possess from violation. I would not exclude alteration neither; but even when I changed, it should be to preserve. I should be led to my remedy by a great grievance. In what I did, I should follow the example of our ancestors. I would make the reparation as nearly as possible in the style of the building. A politic caution, a guarded circumspection, a moral rather than a complexional timidity, were among the ruling principles of our forefathers in their most decided conduct. Not being illuminated with the light of which the gentlemen of France tell us they have got so abundant a share, they acted under a strong impression of the ignorance and fallibility of mankind. He that had made them thus fallible, rewarded them for having in their conduct attended to their nature. Let us imitate their caution, if we wish to deserve their fortune or to retain their bequests. Let us add, if we please, but let us preserve what they have left; and, standing on the firm ground of the British constitution, let us be satisfied to admire, rather than attempt to follow in their desperate flights the aëronauts of France.

I have told you candidly my sentiments. I think they are not likely to alter yours. I do not know that they ought. You are young; you cannot guide, but must follow the fortune of your country. But hereafter they may be of some use to you, in some future form which your commonwealth may take. In the present it can hardly remain; but before its final settlement it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, "through great varieties of untried being," and in all its transmigrations to be purified by fire and blood.

I have little to recommend my opinions but long observation and much impartiality. They come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness; and who in his last acts does not wish to belie the tenor of his life. They come from one, almost the whole of whose public exertion has been a struggle for the liberty of others; from one in whose breast no anger durable or vehement has ever been kindled, but by what he considered as tyranny; and who snatches from his share in the endeavors which are used by good men to discredit opulent oppression, the hours he has employed on your affairs; and who in so doing persuades himself he has not departed from his usual office: they come from one who desires honors, distinctions, and emoluments, but little; and who expects them not at all; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear of obloquy; who shuns contention, though he will hazard an opinion: from one who wishes to preserve consistency; but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end; and, when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise.

LETTER

FROM MR. BURKE,

TO

A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,

IN ANSWER TO SOME OBJECTIONS TO HIS

BOOK ON FRENCH AFFAIRS.

1791.

LETTER.

SIR,

I HAD the honor to receive your letter of the 17th of November last; in which, with some exceptions, you are pleased to consider favorably the letter I have written on the affairs of France. I shall ever accept any mark of approbation, attended with instruction, with more pleasure than general and unqualified praises. The latter can serve only to flatter our vanity; the former, whilst it encourages us to proceed, may help to improve us in our progress.

Some of the errors you point out to me in my printed lette are really such. One only I find to be material. It is corrected in the edition which I take the liberty of sending to you. As to the cavils which may be made on some part of my remarks, with regard to the *gradations* in your new constitution, you observe justly, that they do not affect the substance of my objections. Whether there be a round more or less in the ladder of representation, by which your workmen ascend from their parochial tyranny to their federal anarchy, when the whole scale is false, appears to me of little or no importance.

I published my thoughts on that constitution, that my countrymen might be enabled to estimate the wisdom of the plans which were held out to their imitation. I conceived that the true character of those plans would be best collected from the committee appointed to prepare them. I thought that the scheme of their building would be better comprehended in the design of the architects than in the execution of the masons. It was not worth my reader's while to occupy himself with the alterations by which bungling practice corrects absurd theory. Such an investigation would be end-

less: because every day's past experience of impracticability has driven, and every day's future experience will drive, those men to new devices as exceptionable as the old; and which are no otherwise worthy of observation than as they give a daily proof of the delusion of their promises, and the falsehood of their professions. Had I followed all these changes, my letter would have been only a gazette of their wanderings; a journal of their march from error to error, through a dry dreary desert, unguided by the lights of heaven, or by the contrivance which wisdom has invented to supply their place.

I am unalterably persuaded, that the attempt to oppress, degrade, impoverish, confiscate, and extinguish the original gentlemen, and landed property of a whole nation, cannot be justified under any form it may assume. I am satisfied beyond a doubt, that the project of turning a great empire into a vestry, or into a collection of vestries, and of governing it in the spirit of a parochial administration, is senseless and absurd, in any mode, or with any qualifications. I can never be convinced, that the scheme of placing the highest powers of the state in churchwardens and constables, and other such officers, guided by the prudence of litigious attorneys, and Jew brokers, and set in action by shameless women of the lowest condition, by keepers of hotels, taverns and brothels, by pert apprentices, by clerks, shop-boys, hairdressers, fiddlers, and dancers on the stage, (who, in such a commonwealth as yours, will in future overbear, as already they have overborne, the sober incapacity of dull uninstructed men, of useful but laborious occupations,) can never be put into any shape, that must not be both disgraceful and destructive. The whole of this project, even if it were what it pretends to be, and was not in reality the dominion, through that disgraceful medium, of half a dozen, or perhaps fewer, intriguing politicians, is so mean, so low-minded, so stupid a contrivance, in point of wisdom, as well as so perfectly detestable for its wickedness, that I must always consider the correctives which might make it in any degree practicable, to be so many new objections to it.

In that wretched state of things, some are afraid that the authors of our miseries may be led to precipitate their further designs, by the hints they may receive from the very arguments used to expose the absurdity of their system, to mark the incongruity of its parts, and its inconsistency with their own principles; and that your masters may be led to render their schemes more consistent, by rendering them more mischievous. Excuse the liberty which your indulgence authorizes me to take, when I observe to you, that such apprehensions as these would prevent all exertion of our faculties in this great cause of mankind.

A rash recourse to *force* is not to be justified in a state of real weakness. Such attempts bring on disgrace; and, in their failure, discountenance and discourage more rational endeavors. But *reason* is to be hazarded, though it may be perverted by craft and sophistry; for reason can suffer no loss nor shame, nor can it impede any useful plan of future policy. In the unavoidable uncertainty, as to the effect, which attends on every measure of human prudence, nothing seems a surer antidote to the poison of fraud than its detection. It is true the fraud may be swallowed after this discovery; and perhaps even swallowed the more greedily for being a detected fraud. Men sometimes make a point of honor not to be disabused; and they had rather fall into an hundred errors than confess one. But after all,—when neither our principles nor our dispositions, nor, perhaps, our talents, enable us to encounter delusion with delusion, we must use our best reason to those that ought to be reasonable creatures, and to take our chance for the event. We cannot act on these anomalies in the minds of men. I do not conceive that the persons who have contrived these things can be made much the better or the worse for any thing which can be said to them. *They* are reason proof. Here and there, some men, who were at first carried away by wild good intentions, may be led, when their first fervors are abated, to join in a sober survey of the schemes into which they had been deluded. To those only (and I am sorry to say they are not likely to make a large descrip-

tion) we apply with any hope. I may speak it upon an assurance almost approaching to absolute knowledge, that nothing has been done that has not been contrived from the beginning, even before the state had assembled. *Nulla nova mihi res inopinave surgit.* They are the same men and the same designs that they were from the first, though varied in their appearance. It was the very same animal that at first crawled about in the shape of a caterpillar, that you now see rise into the air, and expand his wings to the sun.

Proceeding, therefore, as we are obliged to proceed, that is upon an hypothesis that we address rational men, can false political principles be more effectually exposed, than by demonstrating that they lead to consequences directly inconsistent with and subversive of the arrangements grounded upon them? If this kind of demonstration is not permitted, the process of reasoning called *deductio ad absurdum*, which even the severity of geometry does not reject, could not be employed at all in legislative discussions. One of our strongest weapons against folly acting with authority, would be lost.

You know, sir, that even the virtuous efforts of your patriots to prevent the ruin of your country have had this very turn given to them. It has been said here, and in France too, that the reigning usurpers would not have carried their tyranny to such destructive lengths, if they had not been stimulated and provoked to it by the acrimony of your opposition. There is a dilemma to which every opposition to successful iniquity must, in the nature of things, be liable. If you lie still, you are considered as an accomplice in the measures in which you silently acquiesce. If you resist, you are accused of provoking irritable power to new excesses. The conduct of a losing party never appears right: at least it never can possess the only infallible criterion of wisdom to vulgar judgments—success.

The indulgence of a sort of undefined hope, an obscure confidence, that some lurking remains of virtue, some degree of shame, might exist in the breasts of the oppressors of France,

has been among the causes which have helped to bring on the common ruin of king and people. There is no safety for honest men, but by believing all possible evil of evil men, and by acting with promptitude, decision, and steadiness on that belief. I well remember, at every epocha of this wonderful history, in every scene of this tragic business, that when your sophistic usurpers were laying down mischievous principles, and even applying them in direct resolutions, it was the fashion to say, that they never intended to execute those declarations in their rigor. This made men careless in their opposition, and remiss in early precaution. By holding out this fallacious hope, the impostors deluded sometimes one description of men, and sometimes another, so that no means of resistance were provided against them, when they came to execute in cruelty what they had planned in fraud.

There are cases in which a man would be ashamed not to have been imposed upon. There is a confidence necessary to human intercourse, and without which men are often more injured by their own suspicions than they would be by the perfidy of others. But when men, whom we *know* to be wicked, impose upon us, we are something worse than dupes. When we know them, their fair pretences become new motives for distrust. There is one case indeed, in which it would be madness not to give the fullest credit to the most deceitful of men, that is, when they make declarations of hostility against us.

I find, that some persons entertain other hopes, which I confess appear more specious than those by which at first so many were deluded and disarmed. They flatter themselves that the extreme misery brought upon the people by their folly, will at last open the eyes of the multitude, if not of their leaders. Much the contrary, I fear. As to the leaders in this system of imposture,—you know, that cheats and deceivers never can repent. The fraudulent have no resource but in fraud. They have no other goods in their magazine. They have no virtue or wisdom in their minds, to which, in a disappointment concerning the profitable effects of fraud and

cunning, they can retreat. The wearing out of an old, serves only to put them upon the invention of a new delusion. Unluckily too, the credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves. They never give people possession; but they always keep them in hope. Your state doctors do not so much as pretend that any good whatsoever has hitherto been derived from their operations, or that the public has prospered in any one instance, under their management. The nation is sick, very sick, by their medicines. But the *charlatan* tells them that what is past cannot be helped;—they have taken the draught, and they must wait its operation with patience;—that the first effects indeed are unpleasant, but that the very sickness is a proof that the dose is of no sluggish operation;—that sickness is inevitable in all constitutional revolutions;—that the body must pass through pain to ease;—that the prescriber is not an empiric who proceeds by vulgar experience, but one who grounds his practice* on the sure rules of art, which cannot possibly fail. You have read, sir, the last manifesto, or mountebank's bill, of the national assembly. You see their presumption in their promises is not lessened by all their failures in the performance. Compare this last address of the assembly, and the present state of your affairs, with the early engagements of that body; engagements which, not content with declaring, they solemnly deposed upon oath, swearing lustily, that if they were supported they would make their country glorious and happy; and then judge whether those who can write such things, or those who can bear to read them, are of *themselves* to be brought to any reasonable course of thought or action.

As to the people at large, when once these miserable sheep have broken the fold, and have got themselves loose, not from the restraint, but from the protection of all the principles of natural authority, and legitimate subordination, they become the natural prey of impostors. When they have

* It is said in the last quackish address of the national assembly to the people of France, that they have not formed their arrangements upon vulgar practice; but on a theory which cannot fail, or something to that effect.

once tasted of the flattery of knaves, they can no longer endure reason, which appears to them only in the form of censure and reproach. Great distress has never hitherto taught, and whilst the world lasts it never will teach, wise lessons to any part of mankind. Men are as much blinded by the extremes of misery as by the extremes of prosperity. Desperate situations produce desperate councils, and desperate measures. The people of France, almost generally, have been taught to look for other resources than those which can be derived from order, frugality, and industry. They are generally armed; and they are made to expect much from the use of arms. *Nihil non arrogant armis.* Besides this, the retrograde order of society has something flattering to the dispositions of mankind. The life of adventurers, gamesters, gipsies, beggars, and robbers, is not unpleasant. It requires restraint to keep men from falling into that habit. The shifting tides of fear and hope, the flight and pursuit, the peril and escape, the alternate famine and feast, of the savage and the thief, after a time, render all course of slow, steady, progressive, unvaried occupation, and the prospect only of a limited mediocrity at the end of long labor, to the last degree tame, languid, and insipid. Those who have been once intoxicated with power, and have derived any kind of emolument from it, even though but for one year, never can willingly abandon it. They may be distressed in the midst of all their power; but they will never look to any thing but power for their relief. When did distress ever oblige a prince to abdicate his authority? And what effect will it have upon those who are made to believe themselves a people of princes?

The more active and stirring part of the lower orders having got government, and the distribution of plunder, into their hands, they will use its resources in each municipality to form a body of adherents. These rulers, and their adherents, will be strong enough to overpower the discontents of those who have not been able to assert their share of the spoil. The unfortunate adventurers in the cheating lottery of plunder will probably be the least sagacious, or the most inactive and irre-

solute of the gang. If, on disappointment, they should dare to stir, they will soon be suppressed as rebels and mutineers by their brother rebels. Scantily fed for awhile, with the offal of plunder, they will drop off by degrees; they will be driven out of sight, and out of thought; and they will be left to perish obscurely, like rats, in holes and corners.

From the forced repentance of invalid mutineers and disbanded thieves, you can hope for no resource. Government itself, which ought to constrain the more bold and dexterous of these robbers, is their accomplice. Its arms, its treasures, its all, are in their hands. Judicature, which above all things should awe them, is their creature and their instrument. Nothing seems to me to render your internal situation more desperate than this one circumstance of the state of your judicature. Many days are not passed since we have seen a set of men brought forth by your rulers for a most critical function. Your rulers brought forth a set of men, steaming from the sweat and drudgery, and all black with the smoke and soot of the forge of confiscation and robbery—*ardentis massæ fuligine lippos*, a set of men brought forth from the trade of hammering arms of proof, offensive and defensive, in aid of the enterprises, and for the subsequent protection of housebreakers, murderers, traitors, and malefactors; men, who had their minds seasoned with theories perfectly conformable to their practice, and who had always laughed at possession and prescription, and defied all the fundamental maxims of jurisprudence. To the horror and stupefaction of all the honest part of this nation, and indeed of all nations who are spectators, we have seen, on the credit of those very practices and principles, and to carry them further into effect, these very men placed on the sacred seat of justice in the capital city of your late kingdom. We see, that in future, you are to be destroyed with more form and regularity. This is not peace; it is only the introduction of a sort of discipline in their hostility. Their tyranny is complete, in their justice; and their lantern is not half so dreadful as their court.

One would think that out of common decency they would

have given you men who had not been in the habit of trampling upon law and justice in the assembly, neutral men, or men apparently neutral, for judges, who are to dispose of your lives and fortunes.

Cromwell, when he attempted to legalize his power, and to settle his conquered country in a state of order, did not look for dispensers of justice in the instruments of his usurpation. Quite the contrary. He sought out, with great solicitude and selection, and even from the party most opposite to his designs, men of weight, and decorum of character; men unstained with the violence of the times, and with hands not fouled with confiscation and sacrilege: for he chose an *Hales* for his chief justice, though he absolutely refused to take his civic oaths, or to make any acknowledgment whatsoever of the legality of his government. Cromwell told this great lawyer, that since he did not approve his title, all he required of him was, to administer, in a manner agreeable to his pure sentiments and unspotted character, that justice without which human society cannot subsist: that it was not his particular government, but civil order itself, which as a judge he wished him to support. Cromwell knew how to separate the institutions expedient to his usurpation from the administration of the public justice of his country. For Cromwell was a man in whom ambition had not wholly suppressed, but only suspended, the sentiments of religion, and the love (as far as it could consist with his designs) of fair and honorable reputation. Accordingly, we are indebted to this act of his for the preservation of our laws, which some senseless assertors of the rights of men were then on the point of entirely erasing, as relics of feudality and barbarism. Besides, he gave in the appointment of that man, to that age, and to all posterity, the most brilliant example of sincere and fervent piety, exact justice, and profound jurisprudence.* But these are not the things in which your philosophic usurpers choose to follow Cromwell.

* See Burnet's life of Hales.

One would think, that after an honest and necessary revolution (if they had a mind that theirs should pass for such) your masters would have imitated the virtuous policy of those who have been at the head of revolutions of that glorious character. Burnet tells us, that nothing tended to reconcile the English nation to the government of king William so much as the care he took to fill the vacant bishoprics with men who had attracted the public esteem by their learning, eloquence, and piety, and above all, by their known moderation in the state. With you, in your purifying revolution, whom have you chosen to regulate the church? Mr. Mirabeau is a fine speaker—and a fine writer—and a fine—a very fine man;—but really nothing gave more surprise to every body here, than to find him the supreme head of your ecclesiastical affairs. The rest is of course. Your assembly addresses a manifesto to France, in which they tell the people, with an insulting irony, that they have brought the church to its primitive condition. In one respect their declaration is undoubtedly true; for they have brought it to a state of poverty and persecution. What can be hoped for after this? Have not men (if they deserve the name) under this new hope and head of the church, been made bishops, for no other merit than having acted as instruments of atheists; for no other merit than having thrown the children's bread to dogs; and in order to gorge the whole gang of usurers, pedlars, and itinerant Jew-discounters at the corners of streets, starved the poor of their Christian flocks, and their own brother pastors? Have not such men been made bishops to administer in temples, in which (if the patriotic donations have not already stripped them of their vessels) the churchwardens ought to take security for the altar plate, and not so much as to trust the chalice in their sacrilegious hands, so long as Jews have assignats on ecclesiastic plunder, to exchange for the silver stolen from churches?

I am told that the very sons of such Jew-jobbers have been made bishops; persons not to be suspected of any sort of *Christian* superstition, fit colleagues to the holy prelate of Autun; and bred at the feet of that Gamaliel. We know

who it was that drove the money-changers out of the temple. We see too who it is that brings them in again. We have in London very respectable persons of the Jewish nation, whom we will keep: but we have of the same tribe others of a very different description,—housebreakers, and receivers of stolen goods, and forgers of paper currency, more than we can conveniently hang. These we can spare to France, to fill the new episcopal thrones: men well versed in swearing; and who will scruple no oath which the fertile genius of any of your reformers can devise.

In matters so ridiculous, it is hard to be grave. On a view of their consequences, it is almost inhuman to treat them lightly. To what a state of savage, stupid, servile insensibility must your people be reduced, who can endure such proceedings in their church, their state, and their judicature, even for a moment! But the deluded people of France are like other madmen, who, to a miracle, bear hunger, and thirst, and cold, and confinement, and the chains and lash of their keeper, whilst all the while they support themselves by the imagination that they are generals of armies, prophets, kings, and emperors. As to a change of mind in these men, who consider infamy as honor, degradation as preferment, bondage to low tyrants as liberty, and the practical scorn and contumely of their upstart masters, as marks of respect and homage, I look upon it as absolutely impracticable. These madmen, to be cured, must first, like other madmen, be subdued. The sound part of the community, which I believe to be large, but by no means the largest part, has been taken by surprise, and is disjointed, terrified, and disarmed. That sound part of the community must first be put into a better condition, before it can do any thing in the way of deliberation or persuasion. This must be an act of power, as well as of wisdom; of power, in the hands of firm, determined patriots, who can distinguish the misled from traitors, who will regulate the state (if such should be their fortune) with a discriminating, manly, and provident mercy; men who are purged of the surfeit and indigestion of systems, if ever they

have been admitted into the habit of their minds; men who will lay the foundation of a real reform, in effacing every vestige of that philosophy which pretends to have made discoveries in the *terra australis* of morality; men who will fix the state upon these bases of morals and politics, which are our old, and immemorial, and, I hope, will be our eternal possession.

This power, to such men, must come from *without*. It may be given to you in pity; for surely no nation ever called so pathetically on the compassion of all its neighbors. It may be given by those neighbors on motives of safety to themselves. Never shall I think any country in Europe to be secure, whilst there is established, in the very centre of it, a state (if so it may be called) founded on principles of anarchy, and which is, in reality, a college of armed fanatics, for the propagation of the principles of assassination, robbery, rebellion, fraud, faction, oppression, and impiety. *Mahomet*, hid, as for a time he was, in the bottom of the sands of Arabia, had his spirit and character been discovered, would have been an object of precaution to provident minds. What if he had erected his fanatic standard for the destruction of the Christian religion in *luce Asiæ*, in the midst of the then noon-day splendor of the then civilized world? The princes of Europe, in the beginning of this century, did well not to suffer the monarchy of France to swallow up the others. They ought not now, in my opinion, to suffer all the monarchies and commonwealths to be swallowed up in the gulf of this polluted anarchy. They may be tolerably safe at present, because the comparative power of France for the present is little. But times and occasions make dangers. Intestine troubles may arise in other countries. There is a power always on the watch, qualified and disposed to profit of every conjuncture, to establish its own principles and modes of mischief, wherever it can hope for success. What mercy would these usurpers have on other sovereigns, and on other nations, when they treat their own king with such unparalleled indignities, and so cruelly oppress their own countrymen?

The king of Prussia, in concurrence with us, nobly interfered to save Holland from confusion. The same power, joined with the rescued Holland and with Great Britain, has put the emperor in the possession of the Netherlands; and secured, under that prince, from all arbitrary innovation, the ancient, hereditary constitution of those provinces. The chamber of Wetzlar has restored the bishop of Liege, unjustly dispossessed by the rebellion of his subjects. The king of Prussia was bound by no treaty, nor alliance of blood, nor had any particular reasons for thinking the emperor's government would be more mischievous or more oppressive to human nature than that of the Turk; yet on mere motives of policy that prince has interposed with the threat of all his force, to snatch even the Turk from the pounces of the imperial eagle. If this is done in favor of a barbarous nation, with a barbarous neglect of police, fatal to the human race, in favor of a nation, by principle in eternal enmity with the christian name; a nation which will not so much as give the salutation of peace (Salam) to any of us; nor make any pact with any christian nation beyond a truce;—if this be done in favor of the Turk, shall it be thought either impolitic, or unjust, or uncharitable, to employ the same power, to rescue from captivity a virtuous monarch (by the courtesy of Europe considered as Most Christian) who, after an intermission of one hundred and seventy-five years, had called together the states of his kingdom, to reform abuses, to establish a free government, and to strengthen his throne; a monarch, who at the very outset, without force, even without solicitation, had given to his people such a Magna Charta of privileges, as never was given by any king to any subjects?—Is it to be tamely borne by kings who love their subjects, or by subjects who love their kings, that this monarch, in the midst of these gracious acts, was insolently and cruelly torn from his palace, by a gang of traitors and assassins, and kept in close prison to this very hour, whilst his royal name and sacred character were used for the total ruin of those whom the laws had appointed him to protect?

The only offence of this unhappy monarch towards his people, was his attempt, under a monarchy, to give them a free constitution. For this, by an example hitherto unheard-of in the world, he has been deposed. It might well disgrace sovereigns to take part with a deposed tyrant. It would suppose in them a vicious sympathy. But not to make a common cause with a just prince, dethroned by traitors and rebels, who proscribe, plunder, confiscate, and in every way cruelly oppress their fellow-citizens, in my opinion is to forget what is due to the honor, and to the rights of all virtuous and legal government.

I think the king of France to be as much an object both of policy and compassion as the Grand Seignior or his states. I do not conceive that the total annihilation of France (if that could be effected) is a desirable thing to Europe; or even to this, its rival nation. Provident patriots did not think it good for Rome, that even Carthage should be quite destroyed; and he was a wise Greek, wise for the general Grecian interests, as well as a brave Lacedemonian enemy, and generous conqueror, who did not wish, by the destruction of Athens, to pluck out the other eye of Greece.

However, sir, what I have here said of the interference of foreign princes is only the opinion of a private individual; who is neither the representative of any state, nor the organ of any party; but who thinks himself bound to express his own sentiments with freedom and energy in a crisis of such importance to the whole human race.

I am not apprehensive that in speaking freely on the subject of the king and queen of France, I shall accelerate (as you fear) the execution of traitorous designs against them. You are of opinion, sir, that the usurpers may, and that they will, gladly lay hold of any pretext to throw off the very name of a king:—assuredly I do not wish ill to your king; but better for him not to live (he does not reign) than to live the passive instrument of tyranny and usurpation.

I certainly meant to show, to the best of my power, that the existence of such an executive officer, in such a system

of republic as theirs, is absurd in the highest degree. But in demonstrating this—to *them*, at least, I can have made no discovery. They only held out the royal name to catch those Frenchmen to whom the name of king is still venerable. They calculate the duration of that sentiment; and when they find it nearly expiring, they will not trouble themselves with excuses for extinguishing the name, as they have the thing. They used it as a sort of navel-string to nourish their unnatural offspring from the bowels of royalty itself. Now that the monster can purvey for its own subsistence, it will only carry the mark about it, as a token of its having torn the womb it came from. Tyrants seldom want pretexts. Fraud is the ready minister of injustice; and whilst the currency of false pretence and sophistic reasoning was expedient to their designs, they were under no necessity of drawing upon me to furnish them with that coin. But pretexts and sophisms have had their day; and have done their work. The usurpation no longer seeks plausibility. It trusts to power.

Nothing that I can say, or that you can say, will hasten them by a single hour, in the execution of a design which they have long since entertained. In spite of their solemn declarations, their soothing addresses, and the multiplied oaths which they have taken, and forced others to take, they will assassinate the king when his name will no longer be necessary to their designs; but not a moment sooner. They will probably first assassinate the queen, whenever the renewed menace of such an assassination loses its effect upon the anxious mind of an affectionate husband. At present, the advantage which they derive from the daily threats against her life, is her only security for preserving it. They keep their sovereign alive for the purpose of exhibiting him, like some wild beast at a fair; as if they had a Bajazet in a cage. They choose to make monarchy contemptible by exposing it to derision, in the person of the most benevolent of their kings.

In my opinion, their insolence appears more odious even

than their crimes. The horrors of the 5th and 6th of October were less detestable than the festival of the 14th of July. There are situations (God forbid I should think that of the 5th and 6th of October one of them) in which the best men may be confounded with the worst, and in the darkness and confusion, in the press and medley of such extremities, it may not be so easy to discriminate the one from the other. The necessities created, even by ill designs, have their excuse. They may be forgotten by others, when the guilty themselves do not choose to cherish their recollection, and by ruminating their offences, nourish themselves through the example of their past, to the perpetration of future crimes. It is in the relaxation of security, it is in the expansion of prosperity, it is in the hour of dilatation of the heart, and of its softening into festivity and pleasure, that the real character of men is discerned. If there is any good in them, it appears then or never. Even wolves and tigers, when gorged with their prey, are safe and gentle. It is at such times that noble minds give all the reins to their good nature. They indulge their genius even to intemperance, in kindness to the afflicted, in generosity to the conquered; forbearing insults, forgiving injuries, overpaying benefits. Full of dignity themselves, they respect dignity in all, but they feel it sacred in the unhappy. But it is then, and basking in the sunshine of unmerited fortune, that low, sordid, ungenerous, and reptile souls swell with their hoarded poisons; it is then that they display their odious splendor, and shine out in the full lustre of their native villany and baseness. It is in that season that no man of sense or honor can be mistaken for one of them. It was in such a season, for them of political ease and security, though their people were but just emerged from actual famine, and were ready to be plunged into a gulf of penury and beggary, that your philosophic lords chose, with an ostentatious pomp and luxury, to feast an incredible number of idle and thoughtless people collected, with art and pains, from all quarters of the world. They constructed a vast amphitheatre in which they

raised a species of pillory.* On this pillory they set their lawful king and queen, with an insulting figure over their heads. There they exposed these objects of pity, and respect to all good minds, to the derision of an unthinking and unprincipled multitude, degenerated even from the versatile tenderness which marks the irregular and capricious feelings of the populace. That their cruel insult might have nothing wanting to complete it, they chose the anniversary of that day in which they exposed the life of their prince to the most imminent dangers, and the vilest indignities, just following the instant when the assassins, whom they had hired without owning, first openly took up arms against their king, corrupted his guards, surprised his castle, butchered some of the poor invalids of his garrison, murdered his governor, and like wild beasts, tore to pieces the chief magistrate of his capital city, on account of his fidelity to his service.

Till the justice of the world is awakened, such as these will go on, without admonition, and without provocation, to every extremity. Those who have made the exhibition of the 14th of July, are capable of every evil. They do not commit crimes for their designs; but they form designs that they may commit crimes. It is not their necessity, but their nature, that impels them. They are modern philosophers, which when you say of them, you express every thing that is ignoble, savage, and hard-hearted.

Besides the sure tokens which are given by the spirit of their particular arrangements, there are some characteristic lineaments in the general policy of your tumultuous despotism, which, in my opinion, indicate, beyond a doubt, that no revolution whatsoever *in their disposition* is to be expected. I mean their scheme of educating the rising generation, the principles which they intend to instil, and the sympathies which they wish to form in the mind, at the season in which it is the most susceptible. Instead of forming their young minds to that docility, to that modesty, which are the grace

* The pillory (carcan) in England is generally made very high, like that raised for exposing the king of France.

and charm of youth, to an admiration of famous examples, and to an averseness to any thing which approaches to pride, petulance, and self-conceit, (distempers to which that time of life is of itself sufficiently liable) they artificially foment these evil dispositions, and even form them into springs of action. Nothing ought to be more weighed than the nature of books recommended by public authority. So recommended, they soon form the character of the age. Uncertain indeed is the efficacy, limited indeed is the extent of a virtuous institution. But if education takes in *vice* as any part of its system, there is no doubt but that it will operate with abundant energy, and to an extent indefinite. The magistrate, who in favor of freedom thinks himself obliged to suffer all sorts of publications, is under a stricter duty than any other, well to consider what sort of writers he shall authorize; and shall recommend, by the strongest of all sanctions, that is, by public honors and rewards. He ought to be cautious how he recommends authors of mixed or ambiguous morality. He ought to be fearful of putting into the hands of youth writers indulgent to the peculiarities of their own complexion, lest they should teach the humors of the professor, rather than the principles of the science. He ought, above all, to be cautious in recommending any writer who has carried marks of a deranged understanding; for where there is no sound reason, there can be no real virtue; and madness is ever vicious and malignant.

The assembly proceeds on maxims the very reverse of these. The assembly recommends to its youth the study of the bold experimenters in morality. Every body knows that there is a great dispute amongst their leaders, which of them is the best resemblance of Rousseau. In truth, they all resemble him. His blood they transfuse into their minds and into their manners. Him they study; him they meditate; him they turn over in all the time they can spare from the laborious mischief of the day, or the debauches of the night. Rousseau is their canon of holy writ; in his life he is their canon of *Polyctetus;* he is their standard figure of perfection. To this man and this writer, as a pattern to authors and to

Frenchmen, the founderies of Paris are now running for statues, with the kettles of their poor and the bells of their churches. If an author had written like a great genius on geometry, though his practical and speculative morals were vicious in the extreme, it might appear, that in voting the statue, they honored only the geometrician. But Rousseau is a moralist, or he is nothing. It is impossible, therefore, putting the circumstances together, to mistake their design in choosing the author, with whom they have begun to recommend a course of studies.

Their great problem is to find a substitute for all the principles which hitherto have been employed to regulate the human will and action. They find dispositions in the mind of such force and quality, as may fit men, far better than the old morality, for the purposes of such a state as theirs, and may go much further in supporting their power, and destroying their enemies. They have therefore chosen a selfish, flattering, seductive, ostentatious vice, in the place of plain duty. True humility, the basis of the christian system, is the low, but deep and firm foundation of all real virtue. But this, as very painful in the practice, and little imposing in the appearance, they have totally discarded. Their object is to merge all natural and all social sentiment in inordinate vanity. In a small degree, and conversant in little things, vanity is of little moment. When full grown, it is the worst of vices, and the occasional mimic of them all. It makes the whole man false. It leaves nothing sincere or trustworthy about him. His best qualities are poisoned and perverted by it, and operate exactly as the worst. When your lords had many writers as immoral as the object of their statue (such as Voltaire and others) they chose Rousseau; because in him that peculiar vice which they wished to erect into ruling virtue, was by far the most conspicuous.

We have had the great professor and founder of *the philosophy of vanity* in England. As I had good opportunities of knowing his proceedings almost from day to day, he left no doubt on my mind, that he entertained no principle either to

influence his heart, or to guide his understanding, but *vanity*. With this vice he was possessed to a degree little short of madness. It is from the same deranged eccentric vanity that this, the insane *Socrates* of the national assembly, was impelled to publish a mad confession of his mad faults, and to attempt a new sort of glory, from bringing hardly to light the obscure and vulgar vices which we know may sometimes be blended with eminent talents. He has not observed on the nature of vanity, who does not know that it is omnivorous; that it has no choice in its food; that it is fond to talk even of its own faults and vices, as what will excite surprise and draw attention, and what will pass at worst for openness and candor.

It was this abuse and perversion, which vanity makes even of hypocrisy, which has driven Rousseau to record a life not so much as chequered, or spotted here and there, with virtues, or even distinguished by a single good action. It is such a life he chooses to offer to the attention of mankind. It is such a life; that, with a wild defiance, he flings in the face of his Creator, whom he acknowledges only to brave. Your assembly, knowing how much more powerful example is found than precept, has chosen this man (by his own account without a single virtue) for a model. To him they erect their first statue. From him they commence their series of honors and distinctions.

It is that new invented virtue which your masters canonize, that led their moral hero constantly to exhaust the stores of his powerful rhetoric in the expression of universal benevolence; whilst his heart was incapable of harboring one spark of common parental affection. Benevolence to the whole species, and want of feeling for every individual with whom the professors come in contact, form the character of the new philosophy. Setting up for an unsocial independence, this their hero of vanity refuses the just price of common labor, as well as the tribute which opulence owes to genius, and which, when paid, honors the giver and the receiver; and then he pleads his beggary as an excuse for his crimes. He melts

with tenderness for those only who touch him by the remotest relation, and then, without one natural pang, casts away, as a sort of offal and excrement, the spawn of his disgustful amours, and sends his children to the hospital of foundlings. The bear loves, licks, and forms her young; but bears are not philosophers. Vanity, however, finds its account in reversing the train of our natural feelings. Thousands admire the sentimental writer; the affectionate father is hardly known in his parish.

Under this philosophic instructer in the *ethics of vanity*, they have attempted in France a regeneration of the moral constitution of man. Statesmen, like your present rulers, exist by every thing which is spurious, fictitious, and false; by every thing which takes the man from his house, and sets him on a stage, which makes him up an artificial creature, with painted theatric sentiments, fit to be seen by the glare of candle-light, and formed to be contemplated at a due distance. Vanity is too apt to prevail in all of us, and in all countries. To the improvement of Frenchmen it seems not absolutely necessary that it should be taught upon system. But it is plain that the present rebellion was its legitimate offspring, and it is piously fed by that rebellion with a daily dole.

If the system of institution recommended by the assembly, is false and theatric, it is because their system of government is of the same character. To that, and to that alone, it is strictly conformable. To understand either, we must connect the morals with the politics of the legislators. Your practical philosophers, systematic in every thing, have wisely began at the source. As the relation between parents and children is the first among the elements of vulgar, natural morality,* they erect statues to a wild, ferocious, low-minded, hard-hearted father, of fine general feelings; a lover of his kind,

* Filiola tua te delectari lætor et probari tibi φυσικην esse την προς τα τεκνα etenim, si hæc non est, nulla potest homini esse ad hominem naturæ adjunctio: qua sublata vitæ societas tolletur. Valete Patron (Rousseau) et tui condiscipuli! (L'Assemblée Nationale.—Cic. Ep. ad Atticum.

but a hater of his kindred. Your masters reject the duties of this vulgar relation, as contrary to liberty; as not founded in the social compact; and not binding according to the rights of men; because the relation is not, of course, the result of *free election;* never so on the side of the children, not always on the part of the parents.

The next relation which they regenerate by their statues to Rousseau, is that which is next in sanctity to that of a father. They differ from those old-fashioned thinkers, who considered pedagogues as sober and venerable characters, and allied to the parental. The moralists of the dark times, *preceptorum sancti voluere parentis esse loco.* In this age of light, they teach the people, that preceptors ought to be in the place of gallants. They systematically corrupt a very corruptible race, (for some time a growing nuisance amongst you) a set of pert petulant literators, to whom, instead of their proper, but severe unostentatious duties, they assign the brilliant part of men of wit and pleasure, of gay, young, military sparks, and danglers at toilets. They call on the rising generation in France, to take a sympathy in the adventures and fortunes, and they endeavor to engage their sensibility on the side of pedagogues, who betray the most awful family trusts, and vitiate their female pupils. They teach the people, that the debauchers of virgins, almost in the arms of their parents, may be safe inmates in their house, and even fit guardians of the honor of those husbands who succeed legally to the office which the young literators had preoccupied, without asking leave of law or conscience.

Thus they dispose of all the family relations of parents and children, husbands and wives. Through this same instructer, by whom they corrupt the morals, they corrupt the taste. Taste and elegance, though they are reckoned only among the smaller and secondary morals, yet are of no mean importance in the regulation of life. A moral taste is not of force to turn vice into virtue; but it recommends virtue with something like the blandishments of pleasure; and it infinitely abates the evils of vice. Rousseau, a writer of great force

and vivacity, is totally destitute of taste in any sense of the word. Your masters, who are his scholars, conceive that all refinement has an aristocratic character. The last age had exhausted all its powers in giving a grace and nobleness to our natural appetites, and in raising them into a higher class and order than seemed justly to belong to them. Through Rousseau, your masters are resolved to destroy these aristocratic prejudices. The passion called love, has so general and powerful an influence; it makes so much of the entertainment, and indeed so much the occupation of that part of life which decides the character for ever, that the mode and the principles on which it engages the sympathy, and strikes the imagination, become of the utmost importance to the morals and manners of every society. Your rulers were well aware of this; and in their system of changing your manners to accommodate them to their politics, they found nothing so convenient as Rousseau. Through him they teach men to love after the fashion of philosophers; that is, they teach to men, to Frenchmen, a love without gallantry; a love without any thing of that fine flower of youthfulness and gentility, which places it, if not among the virtues, among the ornaments of life. Instead of this passion, naturally allied to grace and manners, they infuse into their youth an unfashioned, indelicate, sour, gloomy, ferocious medley of pedantry and lewdness; of metaphysical speculations, blended with the coarsest sensuality. Such is the general morality of the passions to be found in their famous philosopher, in his famous work of philosophic gallantry the *Nouvelle Eloise.*

When the fence from the gallantry of preceptors is broken down, and your families are no longer protected by decent pride, and salutary domestic prejudice, there is but one step to a frightful corruption. The rulers in the national assembly are in good hopes that the females of the first families in France, may become an easy prey to dancing-masters, fiddlers, pattern-drawers, friseurs, and valets de chambre, and other active citizens of that description, who having the entry

into your houses, and being half domesticated by their situation, may be blended with you by regular and irregular relations. By a law, they have made these people their equals. By adopting the sentiments of Rousseau, they have made them your rivals. In this manner, these great legislators complete their plan of leveling, and establish their rights of men on a sure foundation.

I am certain that the writings of Rousseau lead directly to this kind of shameful evil. I have often wondered how he comes to be so much more admired and followed on the continent than he is here. Perhaps a secret charm in the language may have its share in this extraordinary difference. We certainly perceive, and to a degree we feel, in this writer, a style glowing, animated, enthusiastic; at the same time that we find it lax, diffuse, and not in the best taste of composition; all the members of the piece being pretty equally labored and expanded, without any due selection or subordination of parts. He is generally too much on the stretch, and his manner has little variety. We cannot rest upon any of his works, though they contain observations which occasionally discover a considerable insight into human nature. But his doctrines, on the whole, are so inapplicable to real life and manners, that we never dream of drawing from them any rule for laws or conduct, or for fortifying or illustrating any thing by a reference to his opinions. They have with us the fate of older paradoxes,

> Cum ventum ad *verum* est *sensus moresque* repugnant,
> Atque ipsa utilitas justi prope mater et æqui.

Perhaps bold speculations are more acceptable, because more new to you than to us, who have been long since satiated with them. We continue, as in the two last ages, to read more generally, than I believe is now done on the continent, the authors of sound antiquity. These occupy our minds. They give us another taste and turn; and will not suffer us to be more than transiently amused with paradoxical morality. It is not that I consider this writer as wholly des-

titute of just notions. Amongst his irregularities, it must be reckoned that he is sometimes moral, and moral in a very sublime strain. But the *general spirit and tendency* of his works is mischievous; and the more mischievous for this mixture: For perfect depravity of sentiment is not reconcilable with eloquence; and the mind (though corruptible, not complexionally vicious,) would reject and throw off with disgust, a lesson of pure and unmixed evil. These writers make even virtue a pander to vice.

However, I less consider the author, than the system of the assembly in perverting morality, through his means. This I confess makes me nearly despair of any attempt upon the minds of their followers, through reason, honor, or conscience. The great object of your tyrants, is to destroy the gentlemen of France; and for that purpose they destroy, to the best of their power, all the effect of those relations which may render considerable men powerful or even safe. To destroy that order, they vitiate the whole community. That no means may exist of confederating against their tyranny, by the false sympathies of this Nouvelle Eloise, they endeavor to subvert those principles of domestic trust and fidelity, which form the discipline of social life. They propagate principles by which every servant may think it, if not his duty, at least his privilege, to betray his master. By these principles, every considerable father of a family loses the sanctuary of his house. *Debet sua cuique domus esse perfugium tutissimum*, says the law, which your legislators have taken so much pains first to decry, then to repeal. They destroy all the tranquillity and security of domestic life; turning the asylum of the house into a gloomy prison, where the father of the family must drag out a miserable existence, endangered in proportion to the apparent means of his safety; where he is worse than solitary in a crowd of domestics, and more apprehensive from his servants and inmates, than from the hired blood-thirsty mob without doors, who are ready to pull him to the lantern.

It is thus, and for the same end, that they endeavor to destroy that tribunal of conscience which exists independently

of edicts and decrees. Your despots govern by terror. They know, that he who fears God fears nothing else; and therefore they eradicate from the mind, through their Voltaire, their Helvetius, and the rest of that infamous gang, that only sort of fear which generates true courage. Their object is, that their fellow-citizens may be under the dominion of no awe, but that of their committee of research, and of their lantern.

Having found the advantage of assassination in the formation of their tyranny, it is the grand resource in which they trust for the support of it. Whoever opposes any of their proceedings, or is suspected of a design to oppose them, is to answer it with his life, or the lives of his wife and children. This infamous, cruel, and cowardly practice of assassination, they have the impudence to call *merciful*. They boast that they operated their usurpation rather by terror than by force; and that a few seasonable murders have prevented the bloodshed of many battles. There is no doubt they will extend these acts of mercy whenever they see an occasion. Dreadful, however, will be the consequences of their attempt to avoid the evils of war, by the merciful policy of murder. If, by effectual punishment of the guilty, they do not wholly disavow that practice, and the threat of it too, as any part of their policy; if ever a foreign prince enters into France, he must enter it as into a country of assassins. The mode of civilized war will not be practised; nor are the French who act on the present system entitled to expect it. They, whose known policy is to assassinate every citizen whom they suspect to be discontented by their tyranny, and to corrupt the soldiery of every open enemy, must look for no modified hostility. All war, which is not battle, will be military execution. This will beget acts of retaliation from you; and every retaliation will beget a new revenge. The hell-hounds of war, on all sides, will be uncoupled and unmuzzled. The new school of murder and barbarism, set up in Paris, having destroyed (so far as in it lies) all the other manners and principles which have hitherto civilized Europe, will destroy also the

mode of civilized war, which, more than any thing else, has distinguished the Christian world. Such is the approaching golden age, which the Virgil* of your assembly has sung to his Pollios!

In such a situation of your political, your civil, and your social morals and manners, how can you be hurt by the freedom of any discussion? Caution is for those who have something to lose. What I have said to justify myself in not apprehending any ill consequence from a free discussion of the absurd consequences which flow from the relation of the lawful king to the usurped constitution, will apply to my vindication with regard to the exposure I have made of the state of the army under the same sophistic usurpation. The present tyrants want no arguments to prove, what they must daily feel, that no good army can exist on their principles. They are in no want of a monitor to suggest to them the policy of getting rid of the army, as well as of the king, whenever they are in a condition to affect that measure. What hopes may be entertained of your army for the restoration of your liberties, I know not. At present, yielding obedience to the pretended orders of a king, who, they are perfectly apprized, has no will, and who never can issue a mandate which is not intended, in the first operation, or in its certain consequences, for his own destruction, your army seems to make one of the principal links in the chain of that servitude of anarchy, by which a cruel usurpation holds an undone people at once in bondage and confusion.

You ask me what I think of the conduct of general Monk. How this affects your case, I cannot tell. I doubt whether you possess, in France, any persons of a capacity to serve the French monarchy in the same manner in which Monk served the monarchy of England. The army which Monk commanded had been formed by Cromwell to a perfection of discipline which perhaps has never been exceeded. That

* Mirabeau's speech concerning universal peace.

army was besides of an excellent composition. The soldiers were men of extraordinary piety after their mode, of the greatest regularity, and even severity of manners; brave in the field, but modest, quiet and orderly, in their quarters; men who abhorred the idea of assassinating their officers or any other persons; and who (they at least who served in this island) were firmly attached to those generals, by whom they were well treated and ably commanded. Such an army, once gained, might be depended on. I doubt much, if you could now find a Monk, whether a Monk could find in France such an army.

I certainly agree with you, that in all probability we owe our whole constitution to the restoration of the English monarchy. The state of things from which Monk relieved England, was however by no means, at that time, so deplorable in any sense, as yours is now, and under the present sway is likely to continue. Cromwell had delivered England from anarchy. His government, though military and despotic, had been regular and orderly. Under the iron, and under the yoke, the soil yielded its produce. After his death, the evils of anarchy were rather dreaded than felt. Every man was yet safe in his house and in his property. But it must be admitted, that Monk freed this nation from great and just apprehensions both of future anarchy and of probable tyranny in some form or other. The king whom he gave us was indeed the very reverse of your benignant sovereign, who in reward for his attempt to bestow liberty on his subjects, languishes himself in prison. The person given to us by Monk was a man without any sense of his duty as a prince; without any regard to the dignity of his crown; without any love to his people; dissolute, false, venal, and destitute of any positive good quality whatsoever, except a pleasant temper, and the manners of a gentleman. Yet the restoration of our monarchy, even in the person of such a prince, was every thing to us; for without monarchy in England, most certainly we never can enjoy either peace or liberty. It was under this conviction that the very first

regular step which we took on the revolution of 1688, was to fill the throne with a real king; and even before it could be done in due form, the chiefs of the nation did not attempt themselves to exercise authority so much as by *interim*. They instantly requested the prince of Orange to take the government on himself. The throne was not effectively vacant for an hour.

Your fundamental laws, as well as ours, suppose a monarchy. Your zeal, sir, in standing so firmly for it as you have done, shews not only a sacred respect for your honor and fidelity, but a well-informed attachment to the real welfare and true liberties of your country. I have expressed myself ill, if I have given you cause to imagine, that I prefer the conduct of those who have retired from this warfare to your behavior, who, with a courage and constancy almost supernatural, have struggled against tyranny, and kept the field to the last. You see I have corrected the exceptionable part in the edition which I now send you. Indeed, in such terrible extremities as yours, it is not easy to say, in a political view, what line of conduct is the most advisable. In that state of things, I cannot bring myself severely to condemn persons who are wholly unable to bear so much as the sight of those men in the throne of legislation, who are only fit to be the objects of criminal justice. If fatigue, if disgust, if unsurmountable nausea drive them away from such spectacles, *ubi miseriarum pars non minima erat, videre et aspici*, I cannot blame them. He must have an heart of adamant who could hear a set of traitors puffed up with unexpected and undeserved power, obtained by an ignoble, unmanly, and perfidious rebellion, treating their honest fellow-citizens as rebels, because they refused to bind themselves through their conscience, against the dictates of conscience itself, and had declined to swear an active compliance with their own ruin. How could a man of common flesh and blood endure, that those, who but the other day had skulked unobserved in their antichambers, scornfully insulting men, illustrious in their rank, sacred in their function, and ven-

erable in their character, now in decline of life, and swimming on the wrecks of their fortunes, that those miscreants should tell such men scornfully and outrageously, after they had robbed them of all their property, that it is more than enough if they are allowed what will keep them from absolute famine, and that for the rest, they must let their grey hairs fall over the plough, to make out a scanty subsistence with the labor of their hands! Last, and worst, who could endure to bear this unnatural, insolent, and savage despotism called liberty? If, at this distance, sitting quietly by my fire, I cannot read their decrees and speeches without indignation, shall I condemn those who have fled from the actual sight and hearing of all these horrors? No, no! mankind has no title to demand that we should be slaves to their guilt and insolence; or that we should serve them in spite of themselves. Minds, sore with the poignant sense of insulted virtue, filled with high disdain against the pride of triumphant baseness, often have it not in their choice to stand their ground. Their complexion (which might defy the rack) cannot go through such a trial. Something very high must fortify men to that proof. But when I am driven to comparison, surely I cannot hesitate for a moment to prefer to such men as are common, those heroes, who, in the midst of despair, perform all the tasks of hope; who subdue their feelings to their duties; who, in the cause of humanity, liberty, and honor, abandon all the satisfactions of life, and every day incur a fresh risk of life itself. Do me the justice to believe that I never can prefer any fastidious virtue (virtue still) to the unconquered perseverance, to the affectionate patience of those who watch day and night, by the bed-side of their delirious country, who, for their love to that dear and venerable name, bear all the disgusts, and all the buffets they receive from their frantic mother. Sir, I do look on you as true martyrs; I regard you as soldiers who act far more in the spirit of our Commander in chief, and the Captain of our salvation, than those who have left you; though I must first bolt myself very thoroughly, and know that I could do bet-

ter, before I can censure them. I assure you, sir, that, when I consider your unconquerable fidelity to your sovereign, and to your country; the courage, fortitude, magnanimity, and long-suffering of yourself, and the Abbé Maury, and of Mr. Cazales, and of many worthy persons of all orders, in your assembly, I forget, in the lustre of these great qualities, that on your side has been displayed an eloquence so rational, manly, and convincing, that no time or country, perhaps, has ever excelled. But your talents disappear in my admiration of your virtues.

As to Mr. Mounier and Mr. Lally, I have always wished to do justice to their parts, and their eloquence, and the general purity of their motives. Indeed I saw very well from the beginning, the mischiefs which, with all these talents and good intentions, they would do their country, through their confidence in systems. But their distemper was an epidemic malady. They were young and inexperienced; and when will young and inexperienced men learn caution and distrust of themselves? And when will men, young or old, if suddenly raised to far higher power than that which absolute kings and emperors commonly enjoy, learn any thing like moderation? Monarchs in general respect some settled order of things, which they find it difficult to move from its basis, and to which they are obliged to conform, even when there are no positive limitations to their power. These gentlemen conceived that they were chosen to new model the state, and even the whole order of civil society itself. No wonder that *they* entertained dangerous visions, when the king's ministers, trustees for the sacred deposit of the monarchy, were so infected with the contagion of project and system (I can hardly think it black premeditated treachery) that they publicly advertised for plans and schemes of government, as if they were to provide for the rebuilding of an hospital that had been burned down. What was this, but to unchain the fury of rash speculation amongst a people, of itself but too apt to be guided by a heated imagination, and a wild spirit of adventure?

The fault of Mr. Mounier and Mr. Lally was very great; but it was very general. If those gentlemen stopped when they came to the brink of the gulf of guilt and public misery, that yawned before them in the abyss of these dark and bottomless speculations, I forgive their first error: in that they were involved with many. Their repentance was their own.

They who consider Mounier and Lally as deserters, must regard themselves as murderers and as traitors: for from what else than murder and treason did they desert? For my part, I honor them for not having carried mistake into crime. If, indeed, I thought that they were not cured by experience; that they were not made sensible that those who would reform a state, ought to assume some actual constitution of government which is to be reformed; if they are not at length satisfied that it is become a necessary preliminary to liberty in France, to commence by the reëstablishment of order and property of *every* kind, and, through the reëstablishment of their monarchy, of every one of the old habitual distinctions and classes of the state; if they do not see that these classes are not to be confounded in order to be afterwards revived and separated; if they are not convinced that the scheme of parochial and club governments takes up the state at the wrong end, and is a low and senseless contrivance (as making the sole constitution of a supreme power) I should then allow, that their early rashness ought to be remembered to the last moment of their lives.

You gently reprehend me, because in holding out the picture of your disastrous situation, I suggest no plan for a remedy. Alas! sir, the proposition of plans, without an attention to circumstances, is the very cause of all your misfortunes; and never shall you find me aggravating, by the infusion of any speculations of mine, the evils which have arisen from the speculations of others. Your malady, in this respect, is a disorder of repletion. You seem to think, that my keeping back my poor ideas, may arise from an indifference to the welfare of a foreign, and sometimes an hostile nation. No, sir, I

faithfully assure you, my reserve is owing to no such causes. Is this letter, swelled to a second book, a mark of national antipathy, or even of national indifference? I should act altogether in the spirit of the same caution, in a similar state of our own domestic affairs. If I were to venture any advice, in any case, it would be my best. The sacred duty of an adviser (one of the most inviolable that exists) would lead me, towards a real enemy, to act as if my best friend were the party concerned. But I dare not risk a speculation with no better view of your affairs than at present I can command; my caution is not from disregard, but from solicitude for your welfare. It is suggested solely from my dread of becoming the author of inconsiderate counsel.

It is not, that as this strange series of actions has passed before my eyes, I have not indulged my mind in a great variety of political speculations concerning them. But compelled by no such positive duty as does not permit me to evade an opinion; called upon by no ruling power, without authority as I am, and without confidence, I should ill answer my own ideas of what would become myself, or what would be serviceable to others, if I were, as a volunteer, to obtrude any project of mine upon a nation, to whose circumstances I could not be sure it might be applicable.

Permit me to say, that if I were as confident, as I ought to be diffident in my own loose, general ideas, I never should venture to broach them, if but at twenty leagues distance from the centre of your affairs. I must see with my own eyes, I must, in a manner, touch with my own hands, not only the fixed, but the momentary circumstances, before I could venture to suggest any political project whatsoever. I must know the power and disposition to accept, to execute, to persevere. I must see all the aids, and all the obstacles. I must see the means of correcting the plan, where correctives would be wanted. I must see the things; I must see the men. Without a concurrence and adaptation of these to the design, the very best speculative projects might become not only useless but mischievous. Plans must be made for men. We cannot

think of making men, and binding nature to our designs. People at a distance must judge ill of men. They do not always answer to their reputation when you approach them. Nay, the perspective varies, and shews them quite otherwise than you thought them. At a distance, if we judge uncertainly of men, we must judge worse of *opportunities*, which continually vary their shapes and colors, and pass away like clouds. The Eastern politicians never do any thing without the opinion of the astrologers on the *fortunate moment*. They are in the right, if they can do no better; for the opinion of fortune is something towards commanding it. Statesmen of a more judicious prescience, look for the fortunate moment too; but they seek it, not in the conjunctions and oppositions of planets, but in the conjunctions and oppositions of men and things. These form their almanac.

To illustrate the mischief of a wise plan, without any attention to means and circumstances, it is not necessary to go farther than to your recent history. In the condition in which France was found three years ago, what better system could be proposed, what less, even savoring of wild theory, what fitter to provide for all the exigences, whilst it reformed all the abuses of government, than the convention of the states general? I think nothing better could be imagined. But I have censured, and do still presume to censure your parliament of Paris, for not having suggested to the king, that this proper measure was of all measures the most critical and arduous; one in which the utmost circumspection, and the greatest number of precautions, were the most absolutely necessary. The very confession that a government wants either amendment in its conformation or relief to great distress, causes it to lose half its reputation, and as great a proportion of its strength as depends upon that reputation. It was therefore necessary, first to put government out of danger, whilst at its own desire it suffered such an operation, as a general reform at the hands of those who were much more filled with a sense of the disease, than provided with rational means of a cure.

It may be said, that this care, and these precautions, were more naturally the duty of the king's ministers, than that of the parliament. They were so; but every man must answer in his estimation for the advice he gives, when he puts the conduct of his measure into hands who he does not know will execute his plans according to his ideas. Three or four ministers were not to be trusted with the being of the French monarchy, of all the orders, and of all the distinctions, and all the property of the kingdom. What must be the prudence of those who could think, in the then known temper of the people of Paris, of assembling the states at a place situated as Versailles?

The parliament of Paris did worse than to inspire this blind confidence into the king. For, as if names were things, they took no notice of (indeed they rather countenanced) the deviations which were manifest in the execution, from the true ancient principles of the plan which they recommended. These deviations (as guardians of the ancient laws, usages, and constitution of the kingdom) the parliament of Paris ought not to have suffered, without the strongest remonstrances to the throne. It ought to have sounded the alarm to the whole nation, as it had often done on things of infinitely less importance. Under pretence of resuscitating the ancient constitution, the parliament saw one of the strongest acts of innovation, and the most leading in its consequences, carried into effect before their eyes; and an innovation through the medium of despotism; that is, they suffered the king's ministers to new model the whole representation of the *tiers etat*, and, in a great measure, that of the clergy too, and to destroy the ancient proportions of the orders. These changes, unquestionably the king had no right to make; and here the parliaments failed in their duty, and along with their country, have perished by this failure.

What a number of faults have led to this multitude of misfortunes, and almost all from this one source, that of considering certain general maxims, without attending to circumstances, to times, to places, to conjunctures, and to actors! If we do

not attend scrupulously to all these, the medicine of to-day becomes the poison of to-morrow. If any measure was in the abstract better than another, it was to call the states—*ea visa salus morientibus una.*—Certainly it had the appearance.—But see the consequences of not attending to critical moments, of not regarding the symptoms which discriminate diseases, and which distinguish constitutions, complexions, and humors:

> Mox erat hoc ipsum exitio; furiisque refecti,
> Ardebant; ipsique suos, jam morte sub ægra,
> Discissos nudis laniabant dentibus artus.

Thus the potion which was given to strengthen the constitution, to heal divisions, and to compose the minds of men, became the source of debility, frenzy, discord, and utter dissolution.

In this, perhaps, I have answered, I think, another of your questions—Whether the British constitution is adapted to your circumstances? When I praised the British constitution, and wished it to be well studied, I did not mean that its exterior form and positive arrangement should become a model for you, or for any people servilely to copy. I meant to recommend the *principles* from which it has grown, and the policy on which it has been progressively improved out of elements common to you and to us. I am sure it is no visionary theory of mine. It is not an advice that subjects you to the hazard of any experiment. I believed the ancient principles to be wise in all cases of a large empire that would be free. I thought you possessed our principles in your old forms, in as great perfection as we did originally. If your states agreed (as I think they did) with your circumstances, they were best for you. As you had a constitution formed upon principles similar to ours, my idea was, that you might have improved them as we have done, conforming them to the state and exigences of the times, and the condition of property in your country, having the conservation of that property, and the substantial basis of your monarchy, as principal objects in all your reforms.

I do not advise a house of lords to you. Your ancient course by representatives of the noblesse (in your circumstances) appears to me rather a better institution. I know, that with you, a set of men of rank have betrayed their constituents, their honor, their trust, their king, and their country, and leveled themselves with their footmen, that through this degradation they might afterwards put themselves above their natural equals. Some of these persons have entertained a project, that in reward of this their black perfidy and corruption, they may be chosen to give rise to a new order, and to establish themselves into an house of lords. Do you think that, under the name of a British constitution, I mean to recommend to you such lords, made of such kind of stuff? I do not however include in this description all of those who are fond of this scheme.

If you were now to form such an house of peers, it would bear, in my opinion, but little resemblance to ours in its origin, character, or the purposes which it might answer, at the same time that it would destroy your true natural nobility. But if you are not in a condition to frame an house of lords, still less are you capable, in my opinion, of framing any thing which virtually and substantially could be answerable (for the purposes of a stable, regular government,) to our house of commons. That house is, within itself, a much more subtle and artificial combination of parts and powers, than people are generally aware of. What knits it to the other members of the constitution; what fits it to be at once the great support, and the great control of government; what makes it of such admirable service to that monarchy which, if it limits, it secures and strengthens, would require a long discourse, belonging to the leisure of a contemplative man, not to one whose duty it is to join in communicating practically to the people the blessings of such a constitution.

Your *tiers etat* was not in effect and substance a house of commons. You stood in absolute need of something else to supply the manifest defects in such a body as your tiers etat. On a sober and dispassionate view of your old constitution, as

connected with all the present circumstances, I was fully persuaded, that the crown, standing as things have stood (and are likely to stand, if you are to have any monarchy at all,) was and is incapable, alone and by itself, of holding a just balance between the two orders, and at the same time of effecting the interior and exterior purposes of a protecting government. I, whose leading principle it is, in a reformation of the state, to make use of existing materials, am of opinion, that the representation of the clergy, as a separate order, was an institution which touched all the orders more nearly than any of them touched the other; that it was well fitted to connect them; and to hold a place in any wise monarchical commonwealth. If I refer you to your original constitution, and think it, as I do, substantially a good one, I do not amuse you in this, more than in other things, with any inventions of mine. A certain intemperance of intellect is the disease of the time, and the source of all its other diseases. I will keep myself as untainted by it as I can. Your architects build without a foundation. I would readily lend an helping hand to any superstructure, when once this is effectually secured—but first I would say δος πω ςω.

You think, sir, and you might think rightly, upon the first view of the theory, that to provide for the exigences of an empire, so situated and related as that of France, its king ought to be invested with powers very much superior to those which the king of England possesses under the letter of our constitution. Every degree of power necessary to the state, and not destructive to the rational and moral freedom of individuals, to that personal liberty, and personal security, which contribute so much to the vigor, the prosperity, the happiness, and the dignity of a nation—every degree of power which does not suppose the total absence of all control, and all responsibility on the part of ministers,—a king of France, in common sense, ought to possess. But whether the exact measure of authority, assigned by the letter of the law to the king of Great Britain, can answer to the exterior or interior purposes of the French monarchy, is a point which I cannot

venture to judge upon. Here, both in the power given, and its limitations, we have always cautiously felt our way. The parts of our constitution have gradually, and almost insensibly, in a long course of time, accommodated themselves to each other, and to their common, as well as to their separate purposes. But this adaptation of contending parts, as it has not been in ours, so it can never be in yours, or in any country, the effect of a single instantaneous regulation, and no sound heads could ever think of doing it in that manner.

I believe, sir, that many on the continent altogether mistake the condition of a king of Great Britain. He is a real king, and not an executive officer. If he will not trouble himself with contemptible details, nor wish to degrade himself by becoming a party in little squabbles, I am far from sure, that a king of Great Britain, in whatever concerns him as a king, or indeed as a rational man, who combines his public interest with his personal satisfaction, does not possess a more real, solid, extensive power, than the king of France was possessed of before this miserable revolution. The direct power of the king of England is considerable. His indirect, and far more certain power, is great indeed. He stands in need of nothing towards dignity; of nothing towards splendor; of nothing towards authority; of nothing at all towards consideration abroad. When was it that a king of England wanted wherewithal to make him respected, courted, or perhaps even feared in every state of Europe?

I am constantly of opinion, that your states, in three orders, on the footing on which they stood in 1614, were capable of being brought into a proper and harmonious combination with royal authority. This constitution by estates, was the natural and only just representation of France. It grew out of the habitual conditions, relations, and reciprocal claims of men. It grew out of the circumstances of the country, and out of the state of property. The wretched scheme of your present masters, is not to fit the constitution to the people, but wholly to destroy conditions, to dissolve relations, to change the state of the nation, and to subvert property, in order to fit their country to their theory of a constitution.

Until you make out practically that great work, a combination of opposing forces, "a work of labor long, and endless praise," the utmost caution ought to have been used in the reduction of the royal power, which alone was capable of holding together the comparatively heterogeneous mass of your states. But at this day, all these considerations are unseasonable. To what end should we discuss the limitations of royal power? Your king is in prison. Why speculate on the measure and standard of liberty? I doubt much, very much indeed, whether France is at all ripe for liberty on any standard. Men are qualified for civil liberty, in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites; in proportion as their love to justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption; in proportion as they are more disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good, in preference to the flattery of knaves. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.

This sentence the prevalent part of your countrymen execute on themselves. They possessed, not long since, what was next to freedom, a mild paternal monarchy. They despised it for its weakness. They were offered a well-poised free constitution. It did not suit their taste or their temper. They carved for themselves; they flew out, murdered, robbed, and rebelled. They have succeeded, and put over their country an insolent tyranny, made up of cruel and inexorable masters, and that too of a description hitherto not known in the world. The powers and policies by which they have succeeded, are not those of great statesmen, or great military commanders, but the practices of incendiaries, assassins, housebreakers, robbers, spreaders of false news, forgers of false orders from authority, and other delinquencies, of which ordinary justice takes cognizance. Accordingly the spirit of their rule is ex-

actly correspondent to the means by which they obtained it. They act more in the manner of thieves who have got possession of a house, than of conquerors who have subdued a nation.

Opposed to these, in appearance, but in appearance only, is another band, who call themselves the *moderate*. These, if I conceive rightly of their conduct, are a set of men who approve heartily of the whole new constitution, but wish to lay heavy on the most atrocious of those crimes, by which this fine constitution of theirs has been obtained. They are a sort of people who affect to proceed as if they thought that men may deceive without fraud, rob without injustice, and overturn every thing without violence. They are men who would usurp the government of their country with decency and moderation. In fact they are nothing more or better, than men engaged in desperate designs, with feeble minds. They are not honest; they are only ineffectual and unsystematic in their iniquity. They are persons who want not the dispositions, but the energy and vigor that is necessary for great evil machinations. They find that in such designs they fall at best into a secondary rank, and others take the place and lead in usurpation, which they are not qualified to obtain or to hold. They envy to their companions the natural fruit of their crimes; they join to run them down with the hue and cry of mankind, which pursues their common offences; and then hope to mount into their places on the credit of the sobriety with which they show themselves disposed to carry on what may seem most plausible in the mischievous projects they pursue in common. But these men are naturally despised by those who have heads to know, and hearts that are able to go through the necessary demands of bold, wicked enterprises. They are naturally classed below the latter description, and will only be used by them as inferior instruments. They will be only the Fairfaxes of your Cromwells. If they mean honestly, why do they not strengthen the arms of honest men, to support their ancient, legal, wise, and free government, given to them in the spring of 1788, against the inven-

tions of craft, and the theories of ignorance and folly? If they do not, they must continue the scorn of both parties; sometimes the tool, sometimes the incumbrance of that, whose views they approve, whose conduct they decry. These people are only made to be the sport of tyrants. They never can obtain or communicate freedom.

You ask me too, whether we have a committee of research. No, sir,—God forbid! It is the necessary instrument of tyranny and usurpation; and therefore I do not wonder that it has had an early establishment under your present lords. We do not want it.

Excuse my length. I have been somewhat occupied since I was honored with your letter; and I should not have been able to answer it at all, but for the holidays, which have given me means of enjoying the leisure of the country. I am called to duties which I am neither able nor willing to evade. I must soon return to my old conflict with the corruptions and oppressions which have prevailed in our eastern dominions. I must turn myself wholly from those of France.

In England, we *cannot* work so hard as Frenchmen. Frequent relaxation is necessary to us. You are naturally more intense in your application. I did not know this part of your national character, until I went into France in 1773. At present, this your disposition to labor is rather increased than lessened. In your assembly you do not allow yourselves a recess even on Sundays. We have two days in the week, besides the festivals; and besides five or six months of the summer and autumn. This continued unremitted effort of the members of your assembly, I take to be one among the causes of the mischief they have done. They who always labor can have no true judgment. You never give yourselves time to cool. You can never survey, from its proper point of sight, the work you have finished, before you decree its final execution. You can never plan the future by the past. You never go into the country, soberly and dispassionately to observe the effect of your measures on their objects. You cannot feel distinctly how far the people are

rendered better and improved, or more miserable and depraved, by what you have done. You cannot see with your own eyes the sufferings and afflictions you cause. You know them but at a distance, on the statements of those who always flatter the reigning power, and who, amidst their representations of the grievances, inflame your minds against those who are oppressed. These are amongst the effects of unremitted labor, when men exhaust their attention, burn out their candles, and are left in the dark.—*Malo meorum negligentiam, quam istorum obscuram diligentiam.*

I have the honor, &c.

(Signed) EDMUND BURKE.

Beaconsfield, January 19th, 1791.

AN APPEAL

FROM

THE NEW TO THE OLD WHIGS,

IN CONSEQUENCE OF

SOME LATE DISCUSSIONS IN PARLIAMENT,

RELATIVE TO THE

REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

1791.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THERE are some corrections in this Edition, which tend to render the sense less obscure in one or two places. The order of the two last members is also changed, and I believe for the better. This change was made on the suggestion of a very learned person, to the partiality of whose friendship I owe much; to the severity of whose judgment I owe more.

APPEAL.

At Mr. Burke's time of life, and in his dispositions, *petere honestam missionem* was all he had to do with his political associates. This boon they have not chosen to grant him. With many expressions of good-will, in effect they tell him he has loaded the stage too long. They conceive it, though a harsh yet a necessary office, in full parliament to declare to the present age, and to as late a posterity, as shall take any concern in the proceedings of our day, that by one book he has disgraced the whole tenor of his life.—Thus they dismiss their old partner of the war. He is advised to retire, whilst they continue to serve the public upon wiser principles, and under better auspices.

Whether Diogenes the Cynic was a true philosopher, cannot easily be determined. He has written nothing. But the sayings of his which are handed down by others, are lively; and may be easily and aptly applied on many occasions by those whose wit is not so perfect as their memory. This Diogenes (as every one will recollect) was citizen of a little bleak town situated on the coast of the Euxine, and exposed to all the buffets of that inhospitable sea. He lived at a great distance from those weather-beaten walls, in ease and indolence, and in the midst of literary leisure, when he was informed that his townsmen had condemned him to be banished from Sinope; he answered coolly, "And I condemn them to live in Sinope."

The gentlemen of the party in which Mr. Burke has always acted, in passing upon him the sentence of retirement,* have

* Newspaper intelligence ought always to be received with some degree of caution. I do not know that the following paragraph is founded on any author-

done nothing more than to confirm the sentence which he had long before passed upon himself. When that retreat was choice, which the tribunal of his peers inflict as punishment, it is plain he does not think their sentence intolerably severe. Whether they who are to continue in the Sinope which shortly he is to leave, will spend the long years which, I hope, remain to them, in a manner more to their satisfaction, than he shall slide down, in silence and obscurity, the slope of his declining days, is best known to him who measures out years, and days, and fortunes.

The quality of the sentence does not however decide on the justice of it. Angry friendship is sometimes as bad as calm enmity. For this reason the cold neutrality of abstract justice, is, to a good and clear cause, a more desirable thing than an affection liable to be any way disturbed. When the trial is by friends, if the decision should happen to be favorable, the honor of the acquittal is lessened; if adverse, the condemnation is exceedingly embittered. It is aggravated by coming from lips professing friendship, and pronouncing judgment with sorrow and reluctance. Taking in the whole view of life, it is more safe to live under the jurisdiction of severe but steady reason, than under the empire of indulgent, but capricious passion. It is certainly well for Mr. Burke that there are impartial men in the world. To them I address myself, pending the appeal which on his part is made

ity; but it comes with an air of authority. The paper is professedly in the interest of the modern Whigs, and under their direction. The paragraph is not disclaimed on their part. It professes to be the decision of those whom its author calls "the great and firm body of the Whigs of England." Who are the Whigs of a different composition, which the promulgator of the sentence considers as composed of fleeting and unsettled particles, I know not, nor whether there be any of that description. The definitive sentence of "the great and firm body of the Whigs of England" (as this paper gives it out) is as follows:

"The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is, that Mr. Burke retires from parliament."—*Morning Chronicle, May* 12, 1791.

from the living to the dead, from the modern Whigs to the ancient.

The gentlemen who, in the name of the party, have passed sentence on Mr. Burke's book, in the light of literary criticism, are judges above all challenge. He did not indeed flatter himself, that as a writer, he could claim the approbation of men whose talents, in his judgment and in the public judgment, approach to prodigies; if ever such persons should be disposed to estimate the merit of a composition upon the standard of their own ability.

In their critical censure, though Mr. Burke may find himself humbled by it as a writer, as a man, and as an Englishman, he finds matter not only of consolation, but of pride. He proposed to convey to a foreign people, not his own ideas, but the prevalent opinions and sentiments of a nation, renowned for wisdom, and celebrated in all ages for a well understood and well regulated love of freedom. This was the avowed purpose of a far greater part of his work. As that work has not been ill received, and as his critics will not only admit but contend, that this reception could not be owing to any excellence in the composition capable of perverting the public judgment, it is clear that he is not disavowed by the nation whose sentiments he had undertaken to describe. His representation is authenticated by the verdict of his country. Had his piece, as a work of skill, been thought worthy of commendation, some doubt might have been entertained of the cause of his success. But the matter stands exactly as he wishes it. He is more happy to have his fidelity in representation recognised by the body of the people, than if he were to be ranked in point of ability (and higher he could not be ranked) with those whose critical censure he has had the misfortune to incur.

It is not from this part of their decision which the author wishes an appeal. There are things which touch him more nearly. To abandon them would argue, not diffidence in his abilities, but treachery to his cause. Had his work been recognised as a pattern for dexterous argument, and powerful

eloquence, yet if it tended to establish maxims, or to inspire sentiments, adverse to the wise and free constitution of this kingdom, he would only have cause to lament, that it possessed qualities fitted to perpetuate the memory of his offence. Oblivion would be the only means of his escaping the reproaches of posterity. But, after receiving the common allowance due to the common weakness of man, he wishes to owe no part of the indulgence of the world to its forgetfulness. He is at issue with the party, before the present, and if ever he can reach it, before the coming generation.

The author, several months previous to his publication, well knew, that two gentlemen, both of them possessed of the most distinguished abilities, and of a most decisive authority in the party, had differed with him in one of the most material points relative to the French revolution; that is in their opinion of the behavior of the French soldiery, and its revolt from its officers. At the time of their public declaration on this subject, he did not imagine the opinion of these two gentlemen had extended a great way beyond themselves. He was however well aware of the probability, that persons of their just credit and influence would at length dispose the greater number to an agreement with their sentiments; and perhaps might induce the whole body to a tacit acquiescence in their declarations, under a natural, and not always an improper dislike of shewing a difference with those who lead their party. I will not deny, that in general this conduct in parties is defensible; but within what limits the practice is to be circumscribed, and with what exceptions the doctrine which supports it is to be received, it is not my present purpose to define. The present question has nothing to do with their motives; it only regards the public expression of their sentiments.

The author is compelled, however reluctantly, to receive the sentence pronounced upon him in the house of commons as that of the party. It proceeded from the mouth of him who must be regarded as its authentic organ. In a discussion which continued for two days, no one gentleman of the

opposition interposed a negative, or even a doubt, in favor of him or his opinions. If an idea consonant to the doctrine of his book, or favorable to his conduct, lurks in the minds of any persons in that description, it is to be considered only as a peculiarity which they indulge to their own private liberty of thinking. The author cannot reckon upon it. It has nothing to do with them as members of a party. In their public capacity, in every thing that meets the public ear, or public eye, the body must be considered as unanimous.

They must have been animated with a very warm zeal against those opinions, because they were under no *necessity* of acting as they did, from any just cause of apprehension that the errors of this writer should be taken for theirs. They might disapprove; it was not necessary they should *disavow* him, as they have done in the whole, and in all the parts of his book; because neither in the whole nor in any of the parts, were they, directly, or by any implication, involved. The author was known indeed to have been warmly, strenuously, and affectionately, against all allurements of ambition, and all possibility of alienation from pride, or personal pique, or peevish jealousy, attached to the Whig party. With one of them he has had a long friendship, which he must ever remember with a melancholy pleasure. To the great, real, and amiable virtues, and to the unequaled abilities of that gentleman, he shall always join with his country in paying a just tribute of applause. There are others in that party for whom, without any shade of sorrow, he bears as high a degree of love as can enter into the human heart; and as much veneration as ought to be paid to human creatures; because he firmly believes, that they are endowed with as many and as great virtues, as the nature of man is capable of producing, joined to great clearness of intellect, to a just judgment, to a wonderful temper, and to true wisdom. His sentiments with regard to them can never vary, without subjecting him to the just indignation of mankind, who are bound, and are generally disposed, to look up with reverence to the best patterns of

their species, and such as give a dignity to the nature of which we all participate. For the whole of the party he has high respect. Upon a view indeed of the composition of all parties, he finds great satisfaction. It is, that in leaving the service of his country, he leaves parliament without all comparison richer in abilities than he found it. Very solid and very brilliant talents distinguish the ministerial benches. The opposite rows are a sort of seminary of genius, and have brought forth such and so great talents as never before (amongst us at least) have appeared together. If their owners are disposed to serve their country, (he trusts they are) they are in a condition to render it services of the highest importance. If, through mistake or passion, they are led to contribute to its ruin, we shall at least have a consolation denied to the ruined country that adjoins us—we shall not be destroyed by men of mean or secondary capacities.

All these considerations of party attachment, of personal regard, and of personal admiration, rendered the author of the Reflections extremely cautious, lest the slightest suspicion should arise of his having undertaken to express the sentiments even of a single man of that description. His words at the outset of his Reflections are these:

"In the first letter I had the honor to write to you, and which at length I send, I wrote neither *for*, nor *from* any description of men; nor shall I in this. My errors, if any, are *my own*. My reputation *alone* is to answer for them." In another place, he says, (p. 126) "I have *no man's* proxy. I speak *only* from *myself;* when I disclaim, as I do, with all possible earnestness, all communion with the actors in that triumph, or with the admirers of it. When I assert any thing else, as concerning the people of England, I speak from observation, *not from authority*."

To say then, that the book did not contain the sentiments of their party, is not to contradict the author, or to clear themselves. If the party had denied his doctrines to be the current opinions of the majority in the nation, they would have put the question on its true issue. There, I hope and believe,

his censures will find on the trial, that the author is as faithful a representative of the general sentiment of the people of England, as any person amongst them can be of the ideas of his own party.

The French revolution can have no connection with the objects of any parties in England formed before the period of that event, unless they choose to imitate any of its acts, or to consolidate any principles of that revolution with their own opinions. The French revolution is no part of their original contract. The matter, standing by itself, is an open subject of political discussion, like all the other revolutions (and there are many) which have been attempted or accomplished in our age. But if any considerable number of British subjects, taking a factious interest in the proceedings of France, begin publicly to incorporate themselves for the subversion of nothing short of the *whole* constitution of this kingdom; to incorporate themselves for the utter overthrow of the body of its laws, civil and ecclesiastical, and with them of the whole system of its manners, in favor of the new constitution, and of the modern usages of the French nation, I think no party principle could bind the author not to express his sentiments strongly against such a faction. On the contrary, he was perhaps bound to mark his dissent, when the leaders of the party were daily going out of their way to make public declarations in parliament, which, notwithstanding the purity of their intentions, had a tendency to encourage ill-designing men in their practices against our constitution.

The members of this faction leave no doubt of the nature and the extent of the mischief they mean to produce. They declare it openly and decisively. Their intentions are not left equivocal. They are put out of all dispute by the thanks which, formally and as it were officially, they issue, in order to recommend, and to promote the circulation of the most atrocious and treasonable libels, against all the hitherto cherished objects of the love and veneration of this people. Is it contrary to the duty of a good subject, to reprobate such pro-

ceedings? Is it alien to the office of a good member of parliament, when such practices increase, and when the audacity of the conspirators grows with their impunity, to point out in his place their evil tendency to the happy constitution which he is chosen to guard? Is it wrong in any sense, to render the people of England sensible how much they must suffer if unfortunately such a wicked faction should become possessed in this country of the same power which their allies in the very next to us have so perfidiously usurped, and so outrageously abused? Is it inhuman to prevent, if possible, the spilling *their* blood, or imprudent to guard against the effusion of *our own*? Is it contrary to any of the honest principles of party, or repugnant to any of the known duties of friendship, for any senator, respectfully, and amicably, to caution his brother members against countenancing by inconsiderate expressions a sort of proceeding which it is impossible they should deliberately approve?

He had undertaken to demonstrate, by arguments which he thought could not be refuted, and by documents, which he was sure could not be denied, that no comparison was to be made between the British government and the French usurpation. That they who endeavored madly to compare them, were by no means making the comparison of one good system with another good system, which varied only in local and circumstantial differences; much less, that they were holding out to us a superior pattern of legal liberty, which we might substitute in the place of our old, and, as they describe it, superannuated constitution. He meant to demonstrate, that the French scheme was not a comparative good, but a positive evil. That the question did not at all turn, as it had been stated, on a parallel between a monarchy and a republic. He denied that the present scheme of things in France, did at all deserve the respectable name of a republic: he had therefore no comparison between monarchies and republics to make. That what was done in France was a wild attempt to methodize anarchy; to perpetuate and fix disorder. That it was a foul, impious, monstrous thing, wholly out of

the course of moral nature. He undertook to prove, that it was generated in treachery, fraud, falsehood, hypocrisy, and unprovoked murder. He offered to make out, that those who have led in that business, had conducted themselves with the utmost perfidy to their colleagues in function, and with the most flagrant perjury both towards their king and their constituents; to the one of whom the assembly had sworn fealty, and to the other, when under no sort of violence or constraint, they had sworn a full obedience to instructions. That by the terror of assassination, they had driven away a very great number of the members, so as to produce a false appearance of a majority. That this fictitious majority had fabricated a constitution, which, as it now stands, is a tyranny far beyond any example that can be found in the civilized European world of our age; that therefore the lovers of it must be lovers, not of liberty, but, if they really understand its nature, of the lowest and basest of all servitude.

He proposed to prove, that the present state of things in France is not a transient evil, productive, as some have too favorably represented it, of a lasting good; but that the present evil is only the means of producing future, and (if that were possible) worse evils. That it is not an undigested, imperfect, and crude scheme of liberty, which may gradually be mellowed and ripened into an orderly and social freedom; but that it is so fundamentally wrong, as to be utterly incapable of correcting itself by any length of time, or of being formed into any mode of polity, of which a member of the house of commons could publicly declare his approbation.

If it had been permitted to Mr. Burke, he would have shewn distinctly, and in detail, that what the assembly calling itself national, had held out as a large and liberal toleration, is in reality a cruel and insidious religious persecution; infinitely more bitter than any which had been heard of within this century. That it had a feature in it worse than the old persecutions. That the old persecutors acted, or pretended to act, from zeal towards some system of piety

and virtue: they gave strong preferences to their own; and if they drove people from one religion, they provided for them another, in which men might take refuge, and expect consolation. That their new persecution is not against a variety in conscience, but against all conscience. That it professes contempt towards its object; and whilst it treats all religion with scorn, is not so much as neutral about the modes: it unites the opposite evils of intolerance and of indifference.

He could have proved, that it is so far from rejecting tests (as unaccountably had been asserted) that the assembly had imposed tests of a peculiar hardship, arising from a cruel and premeditated pecuniary fraud: tests against old principles, sanctioned by the laws, and binding upon the conscience. That these tests were not imposed as titles to some new honor or some new benefit, but to enable men to hold a poor compensation for their legal estates, of which they had been unjustly deprived; and, as they had before been reduced from affluence to indigence, so on refusal to swear against their conscience, they are now driven from indigence to famine, and treated with every possible degree of outrage, insult, and inhumanity. That these tests, which their imposers well knew would not be taken, were intended for the very purpose of cheating their miserable victims out of the compensation which the tyrannic impostors of the assembly had previously and purposely rendered the public unable to pay. That thus their ultimate violence arose from their original fraud.

He would have shewn that the universal peace and concord amongst nations, which these common enemies to mankind had held out with the same fraudulent ends and pretences with which they had uniformly conducted every part of their proceeding, was a coarse and clumsy deception, unworthy to be proposed as an example, by an informed and sagacious British senator, to any other country. That far from peace and good will to men, they meditated war against all other governments; and proposed systematically to excite

in them all the very worst kind of seditions, in order to lead to their common destruction. That they had discovered, in the few instances in which they have hitherto had the power of discovering it, (as at Avignon, and in the Comtat, at Cavailhon and at Carpentras,) in what a savage manner they mean to conduct the seditions and wars they have planned against their neighbors for the sake of putting themselves at the head of a confederation of republics as wild and as mischievous as their own. He would have shewn in what manner that wicked scheme was carried on in those places, without being directly either owned or disclaimed, in hopes that the undone people should at length be obliged to fly to their tyrannic protection, as some sort of refuge from their barbarous and treacherous hostility. He would have shewn from those examples, that neither this nor any other society could be in safety as long as such a public enemy was in a condition to continue directly or indirectly such practices against its peace. That Great Britain was a principal object of their machinations; and that they had begun by establishing correspondences, communications, and a sort of federal union with the factious here. That no practical enjoyment of a thing so imperfect and precarious, as human happiness must be, even under the very best of governments, could be a security for the existence of these governments, during the prevalence of the principles of France, propagated from that grand school of every disorder, and every vice.

He was prepared to shew the madness of their declaration of the pretended rights of man; the childish futility of some of their maxims; the gross and stupid absurdity, and the palpable falsity of others; and the mischievous tendency of all such declarations to the well-being of men and of citizens, and to the safety and prosperity of every just commonwealth. He was prepared to shew that, in their conduct, the assembly had directly violated not only every sound principle of government, but every one, without exception, of their own false or futile maxims; and indeed every rule they had pretended to lay down for their own direction.

In a word, he was ready to shew, that those who could, after such a full and fair exposure, continue to countenance the French insanity, were not mistaken politicians, but bad men; but he thought that in this case, as in many others, ignorance had been the cause of admiration.

These are strong assertions. They required strong proofs. The member who laid down these positions was and is ready to give, in his place, to each position decisive evidence, correspondent to the nature and quality of the several allegations.

In order to judge on the propriety of the interruption given to Mr. Burke, in his speech in the committee of the Quebec bill, it is necessary to inquire, first, whether, on general principles, he ought to have been suffered to prove his allegations? Secondly, whether the time he had chosen was so very unseasonable as to make his exercise of a parliamentary right productive of ill effects on his friends or his country? Thirdly, whether the opinions delivered in his book, and which he had begun to expatiate upon that day, were in contradiction to his former principles, and inconsistent with the general tenor of his public conduct?

They who have made eloquent panegyrics on the French revolution, and who think a free discussion so very advantageous in every case, and under every circumstance, ought not, in my opinion, to have prevented their eulogies from being tried on the test of facts. If their panegyric had been answered with an invective (bating the difference in point of eloquence) the one would have been as good as the other: that is, they would both of them have been good for nothing. The panegyric and the satire ought to be suffered to go to trial; and that which shrinks from it, must be contented to stand at best as a mere declamation.

I do not think Mr. Burke was wrong in the course he took. That which seemed to be recommended to him by Mr. Pitt, was rather to extol the English constitution, than to attack the French. I do not determine what would be best for Mr. Pitt to do in his situation. I do not deny that

he may have good reasons for his reserve. Perhaps they might have been as good for a similar reserve on the part of Mr. Fox, if his zeal had suffered him to listen to them. But there were no motives of ministerial prudence, or of that prudence which ought to guide a man perhaps on the eve of being minister, to restrain the author of the Reflections. He is in no office under the crown; he is not the organ of any party.

The excellences of the British constitution had already exercised and exhausted the talents of the best thinkers, and the most eloquent writers and speakers, that the world ever saw. But in the present case, a system declared to be far better, and which certainly is much newer (to restless and unstable minds no small recommendation) was held out to the admiration of the good people of England. In that case, it was surely proper for those, who had far other thoughts of the French constitution, to scrutinize that plan which has been recommended to our imitation by active and zealous factions, at home and abroad. Our complexion is such, that we are palled with enjoyment, and stimulated with hope; that we become less sensible to a long-possessed benefit, from the very circumstance that it is become habitual. Specious, untried, ambiguous prospects of new advantage recommend themselves to the spirit of adventure, which more or less prevails in every mind. From this temper, men, and factions, and nations too, have sacrificed the good, of which they had been in assured possession, in favor of wild and irrational expectations. What should hinder Mr. Burke, if he thought this temper likely, at one time or other, to prevail in our country, from exposing to a multitude, eager to game, the false calculations of this lottery of fraud?

I allow, as I ought to do, for the effusions which come from a *general* zeal for liberty. This is to be indulged, and even to be encouraged, as long as the *question is general.* An orator, above all men, ought to be allowed a full and free use of the praise of liberty. A common-place in favor of slavery and tyranny delivered to a popular assembly, would indeed

be a bold defiance to all the principles of rhetoric. But in a question whether any particular constitution is or is not a plan of rational liberty, this kind of rhetorical flourish in favor of freedom in general, is surely a little out of its place. It is virtually a begging of the question. It is a song of triumph before the battle.

"But Mr. Fox does not make the panegyric of the new constitution; it is the destruction only of the absolute monarchy he commends." When that nameless thing which has been lately set up in France was described as "the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty, which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," it might at first have led the hearer into an opinion, that the construction of the new fabric was an object of admiration, as well as the demolition of the old. Mr. Fox, however, has explained himself; and it would be too like that captious and caviling spirit, which I so perfectly detest, if I were to pin down the language of an eloquent and ardent mind, to the punctilious exactness of a pleader. Then Mr. Fox did not mean to applaud that monstrous thing, which, by the courtesy of France, they call a constitution. I easily believe it. Far from meriting the praises of a great genius like Mr. Fox, it cannot be approved by any man of common sense, or common information. He cannot admire the change of one piece of barbarism for another, and a worse. He cannot rejoice at the destruction of a monarchy, mitigated by manners, respectful to laws and usages, and attentive, perhaps but too attentive to public opinion, in favor of the tyranny of a licentious, ferocious, and savage multitude, without laws, manners, or morals, and which so far from respecting the general sense of mankind, insolently endeavors to alter all the principles and opinions, which have hitherto guided and contained the world, and to force them into a conformity to their views and actions. His mind is made to better things.

That a man should rejoice and triumph in the destruction of an absolute monarchy; that in such an event he should

overlook the captivity, disgrace, and degradation of an unfortunate prince, and the continual danger to a life which exists only to be endangered; that he should overlook the utter ruin of whole orders and classes of men, extending itself directly, or in its nearest consequences, to at least a million of our kind, and to at least the temporary wretchedness of a whole community, I do not deny to be in some sort natural: because, when people see a political object, which they ardently desire, but in one point of view, they are apt extremely to palliate, or underrate the evils which may arise in obtaining it. This is no reflection on the humanity of those persons. Their good nature I am the last man in the world to dispute. It only shews that they are not sufficiently informed, or sufficiently considerate. When they come to reflect seriously on the transaction, they will think themselves bound to examine what the object is that has been acquired by all this havoc. They will hardly assert that the destruction of an absolute monarchy is a thing good in itself, without any sort of reference to the antecedent state of things, or to consequences which result from the change; without any consideration whether under its ancient rule a country was, to a considerable degree, flourishing and populous, highly cultivated, and highly commercial; and whether, under that domination, though personal liberty had been precarious and insecure, property at least was ever violated. They cannot take the moral sympathies of the human mind along with them, in abstractions separated from the good or evil condition of the state, from the quality of actions, and the character of the actors. None of us love absolute and uncontrolled monarchy; but we could not rejoice at the sufferings of a Marcus Aurelius, or a Trajan, who were absolute monarchs, as we do when Nero is condemned by the senate to be punished *more majorem:* Nor when that monster was obliged to fly with his wife Sporus, and to drink puddle, were men affected in the same manner, as when the venerable Galba, with all his faults and errors, was murdered by a revolted mercenary soldiery. With such things before our

eyes, our feelings contradict our theories; and when this is the case, the feelings are true, and the theory is false. What I contend for is, that in commending the destruction of an absolute monarchy, *all the circumstances* ought not to be wholly overlooked, as "considerations fit only for shallow and superficial minds."—The words of Mr. Fox, or to that effect.

The subversion of a government, to deserve any praise, must be considered but as a step preparatory to the formation of something better, either in the scheme of the government itself, or in the persons who administer it, or in both. These events cannot in reason be separated. For instance, when we praise our revolution of 1688, though the nation, in that act, was on the defensive, and was justified in incurring all the evils of a defensive war, we do not rest there. We always combine with the subversion of the old government the happy settlement which followed. When we estimate that revolution, we mean to comprehend in our calculation both the value of the thing parted with, and the value of the thing received in exchange.

The burthen of proof lies heavily on those who tear to pieces the whole frame and contexture of their country, that they could find no other way of settling a government fit to obtain its rational ends, except that which they have pursued by means unfavorable to all the present happiness of millions of people, and to the utter ruin of several hundreds of thousands. In their political arrangements, men have no right to put the well-being of the present generation wholly out of the question. Perhaps the only moral trust with any certainty in our hands, is the care of our own time. With regard to futurity, we are to treat it like a ward. We are not so to attempt an improvement of his fortune, as to put the capital of his estate to any hazard.

It is not worth our while to discuss, like sophisters, whether, in no case, some evil, for the sake of some benefit, is to be tolerated. Nothing universal can be rationally affirmed on any moral, or any political subject. Pure meta-

physical abstraction does not belong to these matters. The lines of morality are not like the ideal lines of mathematics. They are broad and deep as well as long. They admit of exceptions; they demand modifications. These exceptions and modifications are not made by the process of logic, but by the rules of prudence. Prudence is not only the first in rank of the virtues political and moral, but she is the director, the regulator, the standard of them all. Metaphysics cannot live without definition; but prudence is cautious how she defines. Our courts cannot be more fearful in suffering fictitious cases to be brought before them for eliciting their determination on a point of law, than prudent moralists are in putting extreme and hazardous cases of conscience upon emergences, not existing. Without attempting therefore to define, what never can be defined, the case of a revolution in government, this, I think, may be safely affirmed, that a sore and pressing evil is to be removed, and that a good, great in its amount, and unequivocal in its nature, must be probable almost to certainty, before the inestimable price of our own morals, and the well-being of a number of our fellow-citizens, is paid for a revolution. If ever we ought to be economists even to parsimony, it is in the voluntary production of evil. Every revolution contains in it something of evil.

It must always be, to those who are the greatest amateurs, or even professors of revolutions, a matter very hard to prove, that the late French government was so bad, that nothing worse in the infinite devices of men, could come in its place. They who have brought France to its present condition ought to prove also, by something better than prattling about the Bastile, that their subverted government was as incapable, as the present certainly is, of all improvement and correction. How dare they to say so who have never made that experiment? They are experimenters by their trade. They have made an hundred others, infinitely more hazardous.

The English admirers of the forty-eight thousand republics

which form the French federation, praise them not for what they are, but for what they are to become. They do no talk as politicians but as prophets. But in whatever character they choose to found panegyric on prediction, it will be thought a little singular to praise any work, not for its own merits, but for the merits of something else which may succeed to it. When any political institution is praised, in spite of great and prominent faults of every kind, and in all its parts, it must be supposed to have something excellent in its fundamental principles. It must be shewn that it is right though imperfect; that it is not only by possibility susceptible of improvement, but that it contains in it a principle tending to its melioration.

Before they attempt to shew this progression of their favorite work, from absolute pravity, to finished perfection, they will find themselves engaged in a civil war with those whose cause they maintain. What! alter our sublime constitution, the glory of France, the envy of the world, the pattern for mankind, the master-piece of legislation, the collected and concentrated glory of this enlightened age! Have we not produced it ready made and ready armed, mature in its birth, a perfect goddess of wisdom and of war, hammered by our blacksmith midwives out of the brain of Jupiter himself? Have we not sworn our devout, profane, believing, infidel people, to an allegiance to this goddess, even before she had burst the *dura mater*, and as yet existed only in embryo? Have we not solemnly declared this constitution unalterable by any future legislature? Have we not bound it on posterity for ever, though our abettors have declared that no one generation is competent to bind another? Have we not obliged the members of every future assembly to qualify themselves for their seats by swearing to its conservation?

Indeed the French constitution always must be (if a change is not made in all their principles and fundamental arrangements) a government wholly by popular representation. It must be this or nothing. The French faction considers as

an usurpation, as an atrocious violation of the indefeasible rights of man, every other description of government. Take it or leave it; there is no medium. Let the irrefragable doctors fight out their own controversy in their own way, and with their own weapons; and when they are tired let them commence a treaty of peace. Let the plenipotentiary sophisters of England settle with the diplomatic sophisters of France in what manner right is to be corrected by an infusion of wrong, and how truth may be rendered more true by a due intermixture of falsehood.

Having sufficiently proved, that nothing could make it *generally* improper for Mr. Burke to prove what he had alleged concerning the object of this dispute, I pass to the second question, that is, whether he was justified in choosing the Committee on the Quebec bill as the field for this discussion? If it were necessary, it might be shewn, that he was not the first to bring these discussions into parliament, nor the first to renew them in this session. The fact is notorious. As to the Quebec bill, they were introduced into the debate upon that subject for two plain reasons; first, that as he thought it *then* not advisable to make the proceedings of the factious societies the subject of a direct motion, he had no other way open to him. Nobody has attempted to shew, that it was at all admissible into any other business before the house. Here every thing was favorable. Here was a bill to form a new constitution for a French province under English dominion. The question naturally arose, whether we should settle that constitution upon English ideas, or upon French. This furnished an opportunity for examining into the value of the French constitution, either considered as applicable to colonial government, or in its own nature. The bill too was in a committee. By the privilege of speaking as often as he pleased, he hoped in some measure to supply the want of support, which he had but too much reason to apprehend. In a committee it was always in his power to bring the questions from generalities to facts; from declamation to discussion. Some benefit he actually received from this privilege. These

are plain, obvious, natural reasons for his conduct. I believe they are the true, and the only true ones.

They who justify the frequent interruptions, which at length wholly disabled him from proceeding, attribute their conduct to a very different interpretation of his motives. They say, that through corruption, or malice, or folly, he was acting his part in a plot to make his friend Mr. Fox pass for a republican; and thereby to prevent the gracious intentions of his sovereign from taking effect, which at that time had begun to disclose themselves in his favor.* This is a pretty serious charge. This, on Mr. Burke's part, would be something more

* To explain this it will be necessary to advert to a paragraph which appeared in a paper in the minority interest some time before this debate. "A very dark intrigue has lately been discovered, the authors of which are well known to us; but until the glorious day shall come, when it will not be a LIBEL to tell the TRUTH, we must not be so regardless of our own safety, as to publish their names. We will, however, state the fact, leaving it to the ingenuity of our readers to discover what we dare not publish.

"Since the business of the armament against Russia has been under discussion, a great personage has been heard to say, 'that he was not so wedded to Mr. PITT, as not to be very willing to give his confidence to Mr. Fox, if the latter should be able, in a crisis like the present, to conduct the government of the country with greater advantage to the public.'

"This patriotic declaration immediately alarmed the swarm of courtly insects that live only in the sunshine of ministerial favor. It was thought to be the forerunner of the dismission of Mr. Pitt, and every engine was set at work for the purpose of preventing such an event. The principal engine employed on this occasion was CALUMNY. It was whispered in the ear of a great personage, that Mr. Fox was the last man in England to be trusted by a KING, because he was by PRINCIPLE a REPUBLICAN, and consequently an enemy to MONARCHY.

"In the discussion of the Quebec bill which stood for yesterday, it was the intention of some persons to connect with this subject the French revolution, in hopes that Mr. Fox would be warmed by a collision with Mr. Burke, and induced to defend that revolution in which so much power was taken from, and so little left in, the crown.

"Had Mr. Fox fallen into the snare, his speech on the occasion would have been laid before a great personage, as a proof that a man who could defend such a revolution, might be a very good republican, but could not possibly be a friend to monarchy.

"But those who laid the snare were disappointed; for Mr. Fox, in the short conversation which took place yesterday in the house of commons, said, that he confessedly had thought favorably of the French revolution; but that most cer-

than mistake; something worse than formal irregularity. Any contumely, any outrage is readily passed over, by the indulgence which we all owe to sudden passion. These things are soon forgot upon occasions in which all men are so apt to forget themselves. Deliberate injuries, to a degree, must be remembered, because they require deliberate precautions to be secured against their return.

I am authorized to say for Mr. Burke, that he considers that cause assigned for the outrage offered to him, as ten times worse than the outrage itself. There is such a strange confusion of ideas on this subject, that it is far more difficult to understand the nature of the charge, than to refute it when understood. Mr. Fox's friends were, it seems, seized with a sudden panic terror lest he should pass for a republican. I do not think they had any ground for this apprehension. But let us admit they had. What was there in the Quebec bill, rather than in any other, which could subject him or them to that imputation? Nothing in a discussion of the French constitution, which might arise on the Quebec bill, could tend to make Mr. Fox pass for a republican; except he should take occasion to extol that state of things in France, which affects to be a republic or a confederacy of republics. If such an encomium could make any unfavorable impression on the king's mind, surely his voluntary panegyrics on that event, not so much introduced as intruded into other debates, with which they had little relation, must have produced that effect

tainly he never had, either in parliament or out of parliament, professed or defended republican principles." *Argus, April 22d*, 1791.

Mr. Burke cannot answer for the truth, nor prove the falsehood of the story given by the friends of the party in this paper. He only knows that an opinion of its being well or ill authenticated had no influence on his conduct. He meant only, to the best of his power, to guard the public against the ill designs of factions out of doors. What Mr. Burke did in parliament could hardly have been intended to draw Mr. Fox into any declarations unfavorable to his principles, since (by the account of those who are his friends) he had long before effectually prevented the success of any such scandalous designs. Mr. Fox's friends have themselves done away that imputation on Mr. Burke.

with much more certainty, and much greater force. The Quebec bill, at worst, was only one of those opportunities, carefully sought, and industriously improved by himself. Mr. Sheridan had already brought forth a panegyric on the French system in a still higher strain, with full as little demand from the nature of the business before the house, in a speech too good to be speedily forgotten. Mr. Fox followed him without any direct call from the subject matter, and upon the same ground. To canvass the merits of the French constitution on the Quebec bill could not draw forth any opinions which were not brought forward before, with no small ostentation, and with very little of necessity, or perhaps of propriety. What mode, or what time of discussing the conduct of the French faction in England would not equally tend to kindle this enthusiasm, and afford those occasions for panegyric, which, far from shunning, Mr. Fox has always industriously sought? He himself said very truly, in the debate, that no artifices were necessary to draw from him his opinions upon that subject. But to fall upon Mr. Burke for making an use, at worst not more irregular, of the same liberty, is tantamount to a plain declaration, that the topic of France is *tabooed* or forbidden ground to Mr. Burke, and to Mr. Burke alone. But surely Mr. Fox is not a republican; and what should hinder him, when such a discussion came on, from clearing himself unequivocally (as his friends say he had done near a fortnight before) of all such imputations? Instead of being a disadvantage to him, he would have defeated all his enemies, and Mr. Burke, since he has thought proper to reckon him amongst them.

But it seems, some newspaper or other had imputed to him republican principles, on occasion of his conduct upon the Quebec bill. Supposing Mr. Burke to have seen these newspapers (which is to suppose more than I believe to be true) I would ask, when did the newspapers forbear to charge Mr. Fox, or Mr. Burke himself, with republican principles, or any other principles which they thought could render both of them odious, sometimes to one description of people,

sometimes to another? Mr. Burke, since the publication of his pamphlet, has been a thousand times charged in the newspapers with holding despotic principles. He could not enjoy one moment of domestic quiet, he could not perform the least particle of public duty, if he did not altogether disregard the language of those libels. But however his sensibility might be affected by such abuse, it would in *him* have been thought a most ridiculous reason for shutting up the mouths of Mr. Fox or Mr. Sheridan, so as to prevent their delivering their sentiments of the French revolution,—that forsooth, "the newspapers had lately charged Mr. Burke with being an enemy to liberty."

I allow that those gentlemen have privileges to which Mr. Burke has no claim. But their friends ought to plead those privileges; and not to assign bad reasons, on the principle of what is fair between man and man, and thereby to put themselves on a level with those who can so easily refute them. Let them say at once that his reputation is of no value, and that he has no call to assert it; but that theirs is of infinite concern to the party and the public; and to that consideration he ought to sacrifice all his opinions, and all his feelings.

In that language I should hear a style correspondent to the proceeding; lofty, indeed, but plain and consistent. Admit, however, for a moment, and merely for argument, that this gentleman had as good a right to continue as they had to begin these discussions, in candor and equity they must allow that their voluntary descant in praise of the French constitution was as much an oblique attack on Mr. Burke, as Mr. Burke's inquiry into the foundation of this encomium could possibly be construed into an imputation upon them. They well knew, that he felt like other men; and of course he would think it mean and unworthy, to decline asserting in his place, and in the front of able adversaries, the principles of what he had penned in his closet, and without an opponent before him. They could not but be convinced, that declamations of this kind would rouse him; that he must think, coming from men

of their *calibre*, they were highly mischievous; that they gave countenance to bad men, and bad designs; and, though he was aware that the handling such matters in parliament was delicate, yet he was a man very likely, whenever, much against his will, they were brought there, to resolve, that there they should be thoroughly sifted. Mr. Fox, early in the preceding session, had public notice from Mr. Burke of the light in which he considered every attempt to introduce the example of France into the politics of this country; and of his resolution to break with his best friends, and to join with his worst enemies to prevent it. He hoped that no such necessity would ever exist. But in case it should, his determination was made. The party knew perfectly that he would at least defend himself. He never intended to attack Mr. Fox, nor did he attack him directly or indirectly. His speech kept to its matter. No personality was employed even in the remotest allusion. He never did impute to that gentleman any republican principles, or any other bad principles or bad conduct whatsoever. It was far from his words; it was far from his heart. It must be remembered, that notwithstanding the attempt of Mr. Fox, to fix on Mr. Burke an unjustifiable change of opinion, and the foul crime of teaching a set of maxims to a boy, and afterwards, when these maxims became adult in his mature age, of abandoning both the disciple and the doctrine, Mr. Burke never attempted, in any one particular, either to criminate or to recriminate. It may be said, that he had nothing of the kind in his power. This he does not controvert. He certainly had it not in his inclination. That gentleman had as little ground for the charges which he was so easily provoked to make upon him.

The gentlemen of the party (I include Mr. Fox) have been kind enough to consider the dispute brought on by this business, and the consequent separation of Mr. Burke from their corps, as a matter of regret and uneasiness. I cannot be of opinion, that by his exclusion they have had any loss at all. A man whose opinions are so very adverse to theirs, adverse,

as it was expressed, "as pole to pole," so mischievously as well as so directly adverse, that they found themselves under the necessity of solemnly disclaiming them in full parliament, such a man must ever be to them a most unseemly and unprofitable incumbrance. A coöperation with him could only serve to embarrass them in all their councils. They have besides publicly represented him as a man capable of abusing the docility and confidence of ingenuous youth; and, for a bad reason, or for no reason, of disgracing his whole public life by a scandalous contradiction of every one of his own acts, writings, and declarations. If these charges be true, their exclusion of such a person from their body is a circumstance which does equal honor to their justice and their prudence. If they express a degree of sensibility in being obliged to execute this wise and just sentence, from a consideration of some amiable or some pleasant qualities which in his private life their former friend may happen to possess, they add, to the praise of their wisdom and firmness, the merit of great tenderness of heart, and humanity of disposition.

On their ideas, the new Whig party have, in my opinion, acted as became them. The author of the Reflections, however, on his part, cannot, without great shame to himself, and without entailing everlasting disgrace on his posterity, admit the truth or justice of the charges which have been made upon him; or allow that he has in those Reflections discovered any principles to which honest men are bound to declare, not a shade or two of dissent, but a total fundamental opposition. He must believe, if he does not mean wilfully to abandon his cause and his reputation, that principles fundamentally at variance with those of his book, are fundamentally false. What those principles, the antipodes to his, really are, he can only discover from their contrariety. He is very unwilling to suppose, that the doctrines of some books lately circulated are the principles of the party; though, from the vehement declarations, against his opinions, he is at some loss how to judge otherwise.

For the present, my plan does not render it necessary to say any thing further concerning the merits either of the one set of opinions or the other. The author would have discussed the merits of both in his place, but he was not permitted to do so.

I pass to the next head of charge, Mr. Burke's inconsistency. It is certainly a great aggravation of his fault in embracing false opinions, that in doing so he is not supposed to fill up a void, but that he is guilty of a dereliction of opinions that are true and laudable. This is the great gist of the charge against him. It is not so much that he is wrong in his book (that however is alleged also) as that he has therein belied his whole life. I believe, if he could venture to value himself upon any thing, it is on the virtue of consistency that he would value himself the most. Strip him of this, and you leave him naked indeed.

In the case of any man who had written something, and spoken a great deal, upon very multifarious matter, during upwards of twenty-five years public service, and in as great a variety of important events as perhaps have ever happened in the same number of years, it would appear a little hard, in order to charge such a man with inconsistency, to see collected by his friend, a sort of digest of his sayings, even to such as were merely sportive and jocular. This digest, however, has been made, with equal pains and partiality, and without bringing out those passages of his writings which might tend to shew with what restrictions any expressions, quoted from him, ought to have been understood. From a great statesman he did not quite expect this mode of inquisition. If it only appeared in the works of common pamphleteers, Mr. Burke might safely trust to his reputation. When thus urged, he ought, perhaps, to do a little more. It shall be as little as possible, for I hope not much is wanting. To be totally silent on his charges would not be respectful to Mr. Fox. Accusations sometimes derive a weight from the persons who make them, to which they are not entitled for their matter.

He who thinks that the British constitution ought to consist of the three members, of three very different natures, of which it does actually consist, and thinks it his duty to preserve each of those members in its proper place, and with its proper proportion of power, must (as each shall happen to be attacked) vindicate the three several parts on the several principles peculiarly belonging to them. He cannot assert the democratic part on the principles on which monarchy is supported, nor can he support monarchy on the principles of democracy; nor can he maintain aristocracy on the grounds of the one or of the other, or of both. All these he must support on grounds that are totally different, though practically they may be, and happily with us they are, brought into one harmonious body. A man could not be consistent in defending such various, and, at first view, discordant parts of a mixed constitution, without that sort of inconsistency with which Mr. Burke stands charged.

As any one of the great members of this constitution happens to be endangered, he that is a friend to all of them chooses and presses the topics necessary for the support of the part attacked, with all the strength, the earnestness, the vehemence, with all the power of stating, of argument, and of coloring, which he happens to possess, and which the case demands. He is not to embarrass the minds of his hearers, or to encumber, or overlay his speech, by bringing into view at once (as if he were reading an academic lecture) all that may and ought, when a just occasion presents itself, to be said in favor of the other members. At that time they are out of the court; there is no question concerning them. Whilst he opposes his defence on the part where the attack is made, he presumes, that for his regard to the just rights of all the rest, he has credit in every candid mind. He ought not to apprehend, that his raising fences about popular privileges this day, will infer that he ought, on the next, to concur with those who would pull down the throne: because on the next he defends the throne, it ought not to be supposed that he has abandoned the rights of the people.

A man who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown, those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of any thing very dear to us, removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When Priam had his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Hector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him with a thousand reproaches, his surviving sons, who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic (there is no better than Mr. Fox) would say, that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating, or being indifferent and cold in his affections to the poor relics of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcass to his living children.

Mr. Burke does not stand in need of an allowance of this kind, which, if he did, by candid critics ought to be granted to him. If the principles of a mixed constitution be admitted, he wants no more to justify to consistency every thing he has said and done during the course of a political life just touching to its close. I believe that gentleman has kept himself more clear of running into the fashion of wild visionary theories, or of seeking popularity through every means, than any man perhaps ever did in the same situation.

He was the first man who, on the hustings, at a popular election, rejected the authority of instructions from constituents; or who, in any place, has argued so fully against it. Perhaps the discredit into which that doctrine of compulsive instructions under our constitution is since fallen, may be due, in a great degree, to his opposing himself to it in that manner, and on that occasion.

The reforms in representation, and the bills for shortening

the duration of parliaments, he uniformly and steadily opposed for many years together, in contradiction to many of his best friends. These friends, however, in his better days, when they had more to hope from his service and more to fear from his loss than now they have, never chose to find any inconsistency between his acts and expressions in favor of liberty, and his votes on those questions. But there is a time for all things.

Against the opinion of many friends, even against the solicitation of some of them, he opposed those of the church clergy, who had petitioned the house of commons to be discharged from the subscription. Although he supported the dissenters in their petition for the indulgence which he had refused to the clergy of the established church, in this, as he was not guilty of it, so he was not reproached with inconsistency. At the same time he promoted, and against the wish of several, the clause that gave the dissenting teachers another subscription in the place of that which was then taken away. Neither at that time was the reproach of inconsistency brought against him. People could then distinguish between a difference in conduct, under a variation of circumstances, and an inconsistency in principle. It was not then thought necessary to be freed of him as of an incumbrance.

These instances, a few among many, are produced as an answer to the insinuation of his having pursued high popular courses, which in his late book he has abandoned. Perhaps in his whole life he has never omitted a fair occasion, with whatever risk to him of obloquy as an individual, with whatever detriment to his interest as a member of opposition, to assert the very same doctrines which appear in that book. He told the house, upon an important occasion, and pretty early in his service, that "being warned by the ill effect of a contrary procedure in great examples, he had taken his ideas of liberty very low; in order that they should stick to him, and that he might stick to them to the end of his life."

At popular elections the most rigorous casuists will remit a little of their severity. They will allow to a candidate some

unqualified effusions in favor of freedom, without binding him to adhere to them in their utmost extent. But Mr. Burke put a more strict rule upon himself than most moralists would put upon others. At his first offering himself to Bristol, where he was almost sure he should not obtain, on that or any occasion, a single Tory vote, (in fact he did obtain but one) and rested wholly on the Whig interest, he thought himself bound to tell to the electors, both before and after his election, exactly what a representative they had to expect in him.

"The *distinguishing* part of our constitution (he said) is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate, is the *peculiar* duty and *proper* trust of a member of the house of commons. But the liberty, the *only* liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with *order*, and that not only exists *with* order and virtue, but cannot exist at all *without* them. It inheres in good and steady government, as in *its substance and vital principle.*"

The liberty to which Mr. Burke declared himself attached, is not French liberty. That liberty is nothing but the rein given to vice and confusion. Mr. Burke was then, as he was at the writing of his Reflections, awfully impressed with the difficulties arising from the complex state of our constitution and our empire, and that it might require, in different emergences different sorts of exertions, and the successive call upon all the various principles which uphold and justify it. This will appear from what he said at the close of the poll.

"To be a good member of parliament is, let me tell you, no easy task; especially at this time, when there is so strong a disposition to run into the perilous extremes of *servile* compliance, or *wild popularity*. To unite circumspection with vigor, is absolutely necessary; but it is extremely difficult. We are now members for a rich commercial *city;* this city, however, is but a part of a rich commercial *nation*, the interests of which are *various, multiform, and intricate.* We are members for that great *nation* which, however, is itself but a part of a great *empire*, extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the east and of the west. *All* these wide-spread interests must be *considered;* must be *compared;*

mut be *reconciled*, if possible. We are members for a *free* country; and surely we all know that the machine of a free constitution is no *simple* thing; but as *intricate*, and as *delicate*, as it is valuable. We are members in a *great and ancient* MONARCHY; *and we must preserve religiously the true legal rights of the sovereign, which form the key-stone that binds together the noble and well-constructed arch of our empire and our constitution.* A constitution made up of *balanced powers*, must ever be a critical thing. As such I mean to touch that part of it which comes within my reach."

In this manner Mr. Burke spoke to his constituents seventeen years ago. He spoke, not like a partisan of one particular member of our constitution, but as a person strongly, and on principle, attached to them all. He thought these great and essential members ought to be preserved, and preserved each in its place; and that the monarchy ought not only to be secured in its peculiar existence, but in its pre-eminence too, as the presiding and connecting principle of the whole. Let it be considered, whether the language of his book, printed in 1790, differs from his speech at Bristol in 1774.

With equal justice his opinions on the American war are introduced, as if in his late work he had belied his conduct and opinions in the debates which arose upon that great event. On the American war he never had any opinions which he has seen occasion to retract, or which he has ever retracted. He indeed differs essentially from Mr. Fox as to the cause of that war. Mr. Fox has been pleased to say, that the Americans rebelled, "because they thought they had not enjoyed liberty enough." This cause of the war *from him* I have heard for the first time. It is true that those who stimulated the nation to that measure, did frequently urge this topic. They contended, that the Americans had from the beginning aimed at independence; that from the beginning they meant wholly to throw off the authority of the crown, and to break their connection with the parent country. This Mr. Burke never believed. When he moved his second

conciliatory proposition in the year 1776, he entered into the discussion of this point at very great length; and from nine several heads of presumption, endeavored to prove the charge upon that people not to be true.

If the principles of all he has said and wrote on the occasion, be viewed with common temper, the gentlemen of the party will perceive, that on a supposition that the Americans had rebelled merely in order to enlarge their liberty, Mr. Burke would have thought very differently of the American cause. What might have been in the secret thoughts of some of their leaders it is impossible to say. As far as a man, so locked up as Dr. Franklin, could be expected to communicate his ideas, I believe he opened them to Mr. Burke. It was, I think, the very day before he set out for America, that a very long conversation passed between them, and with a greater air of openness on the doctor's side than Mr. Burke had observed in him before. In this discourse Dr. Franklin lamented, and with apparent sincerity, the separation which he feared was inevitable between Great Britain and her colonies. He certainly spoke of it as an event which gave him the greatest concern. America, he said, would never again see such happy days as she had passed under the protection of England. He observed, that ours was the only instance of a great empire, in which the most distant parts and members had been as well governed as the metropolis and its vicinage: but that the Americans were going to lose the means which secured to them this rare and precious advantage. The question with them was not whether they were to remain as they had been before the troubles, for better, he allowed, they could not hope to be; but whether they were to give up so happy a situation without a struggle? Mr. Burke had several other conversations with him about that time, in none of which, soured and exasperated as his mind certainly was, did he discover any other wish in favor of America than for a security to its *ancient* condition. Mr. Burke's conversation with other Americans was large indeed, and his inquiries extensive and diligent. Trusting to the

result of all these means of information, but trusting much more in the public presumptive indications I have just referred to, and to the reiterated solemn declarations of their assemblies, he always firmly believed that they were purely on the defensive in that rebellion. He considered the Americans as standing at that time, and in that controversy, in the same relation to England, as England did to king James the Second, in 1688. He believed, that they had taken up arms from one motive only; that is, our attempting to tax them without their consent; to tax them for the purposes of maintaining civil and military establishments. If this attempt of ours could have been practically established, he thought with them, that their assemblies would become totally useless; that under the system of policy which was then pursued, the Americans could have no sort of security for their laws or liberties, or for any part of them; and, that the very circumstance of *our* freedom would have augmented the weight of *their* slavery.

Considering the Americans on that defensive footing, he thought Great Britain ought instantly to have closed with them by the repeal of the taxing act. He was of opinion that our general rights over that country would have been preserved by this timely concession.* When, instead of this, a Boston port bill, a Massachusetts charter bill, a Fishery bill, an Intercourse bill, I know not how many hostile bills rushed out like so many tempests from all points of the compass, and were accompanied first with great fleets and armies of English, and followed afterwards with great bodies of foreign troops, he thought that their cause grew daily better, because daily more defensive; and that ours, because daily more offensive, grew daily worse. He therefore in two motions, in two successive years, proposed in parliament many concessions beyond what he had reason to think in the beginning of the troubles would ever be seriously demanded.

So circumstanced, he certainly never could and never did

* See his speech on American taxation, the 19th of April, 1774.

wish the colonists to be subdued by arms. He was fully persuaded, that if such should be the event, they must be held in that subdued state by a great body of standing forces, and perhaps of foreign forces. He was strongly of opinion that such armies, first victorious over Englishmen, in a conflict for English constitutional rights and privileges, and afterwards habituated (though in America) to keep an English people in a state of abject subjection, would prove fatal in the end to the liberties of England itself; that in the mean time this military system would lie as an oppressive burthen upon the national finances; that it would constantly breed and feed new discussions, full of heat and acrimony, leading possibly to a new series of wars; and that foreign powers, whilst we continued in a state at once burthened and distracted, must at length obtain a decided superiority over us. On what part of his late publication, or on what expression that might have escaped him in that work, is any man authorized to charge Mr. Burke with a contradiction to the line of his conduct, and to the current of his doctrines on the American war? The pamphlet is in the hands of his accusers, let them point out the passage if they can.

Indeed, the author has been well sifted and scrutinized by his friends. He is even called to an account for every jocular and light expression. A ludicrous picture which he made with regard to a passage in the speech of a late minister,* has been brought up against him. That passage contained a lamentation for the loss of monarchy to the Americans, after they had separated from Great Britain. He thought it to be unseasonable, ill judged, and ill sorted with the circumstances of all the parties. Mr. Burke, it seems, considered it ridiculous to lament the loss of some monarch or other to a rebel people, at the moment they had for ever quitted their allegiance to theirs and our sovereign; at the time when they had broken off all connection with this nation, and had allied themselves with its enemies. He certainly must have thought

* Lord Lansdown.

it open to ridicule: and, now that it is recalled to his memory, (he had, I believe, wholly forgotten the circumstance,) he recollects that he did treat it with some levity. But is it a fair inference from a jest on this unseasonable lamentation, that he was then an enemy to monarchy either in this or in any other country? The contrary perhaps ought to be inferred, if any thing at all can be argued from pleasantries good or bad. Is it for this reason, or for any thing he has said or done relative to the American war, that he is to enter into an alliance offensive and defensive with every rebellion, in every country, under every circumstance, and raised upon whatever pretence? Is it because he did not wish the Americans to be subdued by arms, that he must be inconsistent with himself, if he reprobates the conduct of those societies in England, who, alleging no one act of tyranny or oppression, and complaining of no hostile attempt against our ancient laws, rights, and usages, are now endeavoring to work the destruction of the crown of this kingdom, and the whole of its constitution? Is he obliged, from the concessions he wished to be made to the colonies, to keep any terms with those clubs and federations, who hold out to us as a pattern for imitation, the proceedings in France, in which a king, who had voluntarily and formally divested himself of the right of taxation, and of all other species of arbitrary power, has been dethroned? Is it because Mr. Burke wished to have America rather conciliated than vanquished, that he must wish well to the army of republics which are set up in France; a country wherein not the people, but the monarch, was wholly on the defensive (a poor, indeed, and feeble defensive,) to preserve *some fragments* of the royal authority against a determined and desperate body of conspirators, whose object it was, with whatever certainty of crimes, with whatever hazard of war, and every other species of calamity, to annihilate the *whole* of that authority; to level all ranks, orders, and distinctions in the state; and utterly to destroy property, not more by their acts than in their principles?

Mr. Burke has been also reproached with an inconsistency

between his late writings and his former conduct, because he had proposed in parliament several economical, leading to several constitutional reforms. Mr. Burke thought, with a majority of the house of commons, that the influence of the crown at one time was too great; but after his majesty had by a gracious message, and several subsequent acts of parliament, reduced it to a standard which satisfied Mr. Fox himself, and, apparently at least, contented whoever wished to go farthest in that reduction, is Mr. Burke to allow that it would be right for us to proceed to indefinite lengths upon that subject? that it would therefore be justifiable in a people owing allegiance to a monarchy, and professing to maintain it, not to *reduce*, but wholly to *take away all* prerogative, and *all* influence whatsoever? Must his having made, in virtue of a plan of economical regulation, a reduction of the influence of the crown, compel him to allow, that it would be right in the French or in us to bring a king to so abject a state, as in function not to be so respectable as an under-sheriff, but in person not to differ from the condition of a mere prisoner? One would think that such a thing as a medium had never been heard of in the moral world.

This mode of arguing from your having done *any* thing in a certain line, to the necessity of doing *every* thing, has political consequences of other moment than those of a logical fallacy. If no man can propose any diminution or modification of an invidious or dangerous power or influence in government, without entitling friends turned into adversaries, to argue him into the destruction of all prerogative, and to a spoliation of the whole patronage of royalty, I do not know what can more effectually deter persons of sober minds from engaging in any reform: nor how the worst enemies to liberty of the subject could contrive any method more fit to bring all correctives on the power of the crown into suspicion and disrepute.

If, say his accusers, the dread of too great influence in the crown of Great Britain could justify the degree of reform which he adopted, the dread of a return under the despotism

of a monarchy might justify the people of France in going much further, and reducing monarchy to its present nothing. Mr. Burke does not allow, that a sufficient argument *ad hominem* is inferable from these premises. If the horror of the excesses of an absolute monarchy furnishes a reason for abolishing it, no monarchy once absolute (all have been so at one period or other) could ever be limited. It must be destroyed; otherwise no way could be found to quiet the fears of those who were formerly subjected to that sway. But the principle of Mr. Burke's proceeding ought to lead him to a very different conclusion;—to this conclusion,—that a monarchy is a thing perfectly susceptible of reform; perfectly susceptible of a balance of power; and that, when reformed and balanced, for a great country, it is the best of all governments. The example of our country might have led France, as it has led him, to perceive that monarchy is not only reconcilable to liberty, but that it may be rendered a great and stable security to its perpetual enjoyment. No correctives which he proposed to the power of the crown could lead him to approve of a plan of a republic (if so it may be reputed) which has no correctives, and which he believes to be incapable of admitting any. No principle of Mr. Burke's conduct or writings obliged him, from consistency, to become an advocate for an exchange of mischiefs; no principle of his could compel him to justify the setting up in the place of a mitigated monarchy, a new and far more despotic power, under which there is no trace of liberty, except what appears in confusion and in crime.

Mr. Burke does not admit that the faction predominant in France have abolished their monarchy and the orders of their state, from any dread of arbitrary power that lay heavy on the minds of the people. It is not very long since he has been in that country. Whilst there he conversed with many descriptions of its inhabitants. A few persons of rank did, he allows, discover strong and manifest tokens of such a spirit of liberty, as might be expected one day to break all bounds. Such gentlemen have since had more reason to repent of their want of foresight than I hope any of the same class will ever

have in this country. But this spirit was far from general even amongst the gentlemen. As to the lower orders and those a little above them, in whose name the present powers domineer, they were far from discovering any sort of dissatisfaction with the power and prerogatives of the crown. That vain people were rather proud of them: they rather despised the English for not having a monarch possessed of such high and perfect authority. *They* had felt nothing from *Lettres de Cachet.* The Bastile could inspire no horrors into *them.* This was a treat for their betters. It was by art and impulse; it was by the sinister use made of a season of scarcity; it was under an infinitely diversified succession of wicked pretences, wholly foreign to the question of monarchy or aristocracy, that this light people were inspired with their present spirit of leveling. Their old vanity was led by art to take another turn: it was dazzled and seduced by military liveries, cockades, and epaulets, until the French populace was led to become the willing, but still the proud and thoughtless instrument and victim of another domination. Neither did that people despise, or hate, or fear their nobility. On the contrary, they valued themselves on the generous qualities which distinguished the chiefs of their nation.

So far as to the attack on Mr. Burke, in consequence of his reforms.

To shew that he has in his last publication abandoned those principles of liberty which have given energy to his youth, and in spite of his censors will afford repose and consolation to his declining age, those who have thought proper in parliament to declare against his book, ought to have produced something in it, which directly or indirectly militates with any rational plan of free government. It is something extraordinary, that they whose memories have so well served them with regard to light and ludicrous expressions which years had consigned to oblivion, should not have been able to quote a single passage in a piece so lately published, which contradicts any thing he has formerly ever said in a style either ludicrous or serious. They quote his former speeches, and his

former votes, but not one syllable from the book. It is only by a collation of the one with the other, that the alleged inconsistency can be established. But as they are unable to cite any such contradictory passage, so neither can they shew any thing in the general tendency and spirit of the whole work unfavorable to a rational and generous spirit of liberty; unless a warm opposition to the spirit of leveling, to the spirit of impiety, to the spirit of proscription, plunder, murder and cannibalism, be adverse to the true principles of freedom.

The author of that book is supposed to have passed from extreme to extreme; but he has always kept himself in a medium. This charge is not so wonderful. It is in the nature of things, that they who are in the centre of a circle should appear directly opposed to those who view them from any part of the circumference. In that middle point, however, he will still remain, though he may hear people who themselves run beyond Aurora and the Ganges, cry out, that he is at the extremity of the west.

In the same debate Mr. Burke was represented by Mr. Fox as arguing in a manner which implied that the British constitution could not be defended, but by abusing all republics ancient and modern. He said nothing to give the least ground for such a censure. He never abused all republics. He has never professed himself a friend or an enemy to republics or to monarchies in the abstract. He thought that the circumstances and habits of every country, which it is always perilous and productive of the greatest calamities to force, are to decide upon the form of its government. There is nothing in his nature, his temper, or his faculties, which should make him an enemy to any republic modern or ancient. Far from it. He has studied the form and spirit of republics very early in life; he has studied them with great attention; and with a mind undisturbed by affection or prejudice. He is indeed convinced that the science of government would be poorly cultivated without that study. But the result in his mind from that investigation has been, and is, that neither England nor France, without infinite detriment to them, as

well in the event as in the experiment, could be brought into a republican form; but that every thing republican which can be introduced with safety into either of them, must be built upon a monarchy; built upon a real, not a nominal monarchy, *as its essential basis;* that all such institutions, whether aristocratic or democratic, must originate from their crown, and in all their proceedings must refer to it; that by the energy of that main spring alone those republican parts must be set in action, and from thence must derive their whole legal effect, (as amongst us they actually do) or the whole will fall into confusion. These republican members have no other point but the crown in which they can possibly unite.

This is the opinion expressed in Mr. Burke's book. He has never varied in that opinion since he came to years of discretion. But surely, if at any time of his life he had entertained other notions, (which however he has never held or professed to hold) the horrible calamities brought upon a great people, by the wild attempt to force their country into a republic, might be more than sufficient to undeceive his understanding, and to free it for ever from such destructive fancies. He is certain, that many, even in France, have been made sick of their theories by their very success in realizing them.

To fortify the imputation of a desertion from his principles, his constant attempts to reform abuses, have been brought forward. It is true, it has been the business of his strength to reform abuses in government; and his last feeble efforts are employed in a struggle against them. Politically he has lived in that element; politically he will die in it. Before he departs, I will admit for him that he deserves to have all his titles of merit brought forth, as they have been, for grounds of condemnation, if one word, justifying or supporting abuses of any sort, is to be found in that book which has kindled so much indignation in the mind of a great man. On the contrary, it spares no existing abuse. Its very purpose is to make war with abuses; not, indeed, to make war with the dead, but with those which live, and flourish, and reign.

The *purpose* for which the abuses of government are brought into view, forms a very material consideration in the mode of treating them. The complaints of a friend are things very different from the invectives of an enemy. The charge of abuses on the late monarchy of France, was not intended to lead to its reformation, but to justify its destruction. They who have raked into all history for the faults of kings, and who have aggravated every fault they have found, have acted consistently; because they acted as enemies. No man can be a friend to a tempered monarchy who bears a decided hatred to monarchy itself. He who, at the present time, is favorable, or even fair to that system, must act towards it as towards a friend with frailties, who is under the prosecution of implacable foes. I think it a duty in that case, not to inflame the public mind against the obnoxious person, by any exaggeration of his faults. It is our duty rather to palliate his errors and defects, or to cast them into the shade, and industriously to bring forward any good qualities that he may happen to possess. But when the man is to be amended, and by amendment to be preserved, then the line of duty takes another direction. When his safety is effectually provided for, it then becomes the office of a friend to urge his faults and vices with all the energy of enlightened affection, to paint them in their most vivid colors, and to bring the moral patient to a better habit. Thus I think with regard to individuals; thus I think with regard to ancient and respected governments and orders of men. A spirit of reformation is never more consistent with itself, than when it refuses to be rendered the means of destruction.

I suppose that enough is said upon these heads of accusation. One more I had nearly forgotten, but I shall soon dispatch it. The author of the Reflections, in the opening of the last parliament, entered on the journals of the House of Commons a motion for a remonstrance to the crown, which is substantially a defence of the preceding parliament, that had been dissolved under displeasure. It is a defence of Mr. Fox. It is a defence of the whigs. By what connection of argu-

ment, by what association of ideas, this apology for Mr. Fox and his party is, by him and them, brought to criminate his and their apologist, I cannot easily divine. It is true, that Mr. Burke received no previous encouragement from Mr. Fox, nor any the least countenance or support at the time when the motion was made, from him or from any gentleman of the party, one only excepted, from whose friendship, on that and on other occasions, he derives an honor to which he must be dull indeed to be insensible.* If that remonstrance therefore was a false or feeble defence of the measures of the party, they were in nowise affected by it. It stands on the journals. This secures to it a permanence which the author cannot expect to any other work of his. Let it speak for itself to the present age, and to all posterity. The party had no concern in it; and it can never be quoted against them. But in the late debate it was produced, not to clear the party from an improper defence in which they had no share, but for the kind purpose of insinuating an inconsistency between the principles of Mr. Burke's defence of the dissolved parliament, and those on which he proceeded in his late Reflections on France.

It requires great ingenuity to make out such a parallel between the two cases, as to found a charge of inconsistency in the principles assumed in arguing the one and the other. What relation had Mr. Fox's India bill to the constitution of France? What relation had that constitution to the question of right, in a house of commons, to give or to withhold its confidence from ministers, and to state that opinion to the crown? What had this discussion to do with Mr. Burke's idea in 1784, of the ill consequences which must in the end arise to the crown from setting up the commons at large as an opposite interest to the commons in parliament? What has this discussion to do with a recorded warning to the people, of their rashly forming a precipitate judgment against their representatives? What had Mr. Burke's opinion of the

* Mr. Windham.

danger of introducing new theoretic language unknown to the records of the kingdom, and calculated to excite vexatious questions, into a parliamentary proceeding, to do with the French assembly, which defies all precedent, and places its whole glory in realizing what had been thought the most visionary theories? What had this in common with the abolition of the French monarchy, or with the principles upon which the English revolution was justified; a revolution in which parliament, in all its acts and all its declarations, religiously adheres to "the form of sound words," without excluding from private discussions, such terms of art as may serve to conduct an inquiry for which none but private persons are responsible? These were the topics of Mr. Burke's proposed remonstrance; all of which topics suppose the existence and mutual relation of our three estates; as well as the relation of the East India Company to the crown, to parliament, and to the peculiar laws, rights, and usages of the people of Hindostan. What reference, I say, had these topics to the constitution of France, in which there is no king, no lords, no commons, no India company to injure or support, no Indian empire to govern or oppress? What relation had all or any of these, or any question which could arise between the prerogatives of the crown and the privileges of parliament, with the censure of those factious persons in Great Britain, whom Mr. Burke states to be engaged, not in favor of privilege against prerogative, or of prerogative against privilege, but in an open attempt against our crown and our parliament; against our constitution in church and state; against all the parts and orders which compose the one and the other?

No persons were more fiercely active against Mr. Fox, and against the measures of the house of commons dissolved in 1784, which Mr. Burke defends in that remonstrance, than several of those revolution-makers, whom Mr. Burke condemns alike in his remonstrance, and in his book. These revolutionists indeed may be well thought to vary in their conduct. He is, however, far from accusing them, in this variation, of the smallest degree of inconsistency. He is per-

suaded, that they are totally indifferent at which end they begin the demolition of the constitution. Some are for commencing their operations with the destruction of the civil powers, in order the better to pull down the ecclesiastical; some wish to begin with the ecclesiastical, in order to facilitate the ruin of the civil; some would destroy the house of commons through the crown; some the crown through the house of commons; and some would overturn both the one and the other through what they call the people. But I believe that this injured writer will think it not at all inconsistent with his present duty, or with his former life, strenuously to oppose all the various partisans of destruction, let them begin where, or when, or how they will. No man would set his face more determinedly against those who should attempt to deprive them, or any description of men, of the rights they possess. No man would be more steady in preventing them from abusing those rights to the destruction of that happy order under which they enjoy them. As to their title to any thing further, it ought to be grounded on the proof they give of the safety with which power may be trusted in their hands. When they attempt without disguise, not to win it from our affections, but to force it from our fears, they shew, in the character of their means of obtaining it, the use they would make of their dominion. That writer is too well read in men, not to know how often the desire and design of a tyrannic domination lurks in the claim of an extravagant liberty. Perhaps in the beginning it *always* displays itself in that manner. No man has ever affected power which he did not hope from the favor of the existing government, in any other mode.

The attacks on the author's consistency relative to France are (however grievous they may be to his feelings) in a great degree external to him and us, and comparatively of little moment to the people of England. The substantial charge upon him is concerning his doctrines relative to the revolution of 1688. Here it is, that they who speak in the name of the party have thought proper to censure him the

most loudly, and with the greatest asperity. Here they fasten; and, if they are right in their fact, with sufficient judgment in their selection. If he be guilty in this point he is equally blamable, whether he is consistent or not. If he endeavors to delude his countrymen by a false representation of the spirit of that leading event, and of the true nature and tenure of the government formed in consequence of it, he is deeply responsible; he is an enemy to the free constitution of the kingdom. But he is not guilty in any sense. I maintain that in his Reflections he has stated the revolution and the settlement upon their true principles of legal reason and constitutional policy.

His authorities are the acts and declarations of parliament given in their proper words. So far as these go, nothing can be added to what he has quoted. The question is, whether he has understood them rightly. I think they speak plain enough. But we must now see whether he proceeds with other authority than his own constructions; and if he does, on what sort of authority he proceeds. In this part, his defence will not be made by argument, but by wager of law. He takes his compurgators, his vouchers, his guarantees, along with him. I know, that he will not be satisfied with a justification proceeding on general reasons of policy. He must be defended on party grounds too; or his cause is not so tenable as I wish it to appear. It must be made out for him, not only, that in his construction of these public acts and monuments he conforms himself to the rules of fair, legal, and logical interpretation; but it must be proved that his construction is in perfect harmony with that of the ancient whigs, to whom, against the sentence of the modern, on his part, I here appeal.

This July, it will be twenty-six years* since he became connected with a man whose memory will ever be precious to Englishmen of all parties, as long as the ideas of honor and virtue, public and private, are understood and cherished in

* July 17, 1765.

this nation. That memory will be kept alive with particular veneration by all rational and honorable whigs. Mr. Burke entered into a connection with that party, through that man, at an age, far from raw and immature; at those years when men are all they are ever likely to become; when he was in the prime and vigor of his life; when the powers of his understanding, according to their standard, were at the best; his memory exercised; his judgment formed; and his reading, much fresher in the recollection, and much readier in the application, than now it is. He was at that time as likely as most men to know what were whig and what were tory principles. He was in a situation to discern what sort of whig principles they entertained, with whom it was his wish to form an eternal connection. Foolish he would have been at that time of life (more foolish than any man who undertakes a public trust would be thought) to adhere to a cause, which he, amongst all those who were engaged in it, had the least sanguine hopes of, as a road to power.

There are who remember, that on the removal of the whigs in the year 1766, he was as free to choose another connection as any man in the kingdom. To put himself out of the way of the negotiations which were then carrying on very eagerly, and through many channels, with the earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of ministry, and did not return until the meeting of parliament. He was at that time free from any thing which looked like an engagement. He was further free at the desire of his friends; for the very day of his return, the marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept an employment under the new system. He believes he might have had such a situation; but again he cheerfully took his fate with the party.

It would be a serious imputation upon the prudence of my friend, to have made even such trivial sacrifices as it was in his power to make, for principles which he did not truly embrace, or did not perfectly understand. In either case the folly would have been great. The question now is, whether, when he first practically professed whig principles, he under-

stood what principles he professed; and whether in his book, he has faithfully expressed them.

When he entered into the whig party, he did not conceive that they pretended to any discoveries. They did not affect to be better whigs, than those were who lived in the days in which principle was put to the test. Some of the whigs of those days were then living. They were what the whigs had been at the revolution; what they had been during the reign of queen Anne; what they had been at the accession of the present royal family.

What they were at those periods is to be seen. It rarely happens to a party to have the opportunity of a clear, authentic, recorded declaration of their political tenets upon the subject of a great constitutional event like that of the revolution. The whigs had that opportunity, or, to speak more properly, they made it. The impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel was undertaken by a whig ministry and a whig house of commons, and carried on before a prevalent and steady majority of whig peers. It was carried on for the express purpose of stating the true grounds and principles of the revolution; what the commons emphatically called their *foundation*. It was carried on for the purpose of condemning the principles on which the revolution was first opposed, and afterwards calumniated, in order by a juridical sentence of the highest authority to confirm and fix whig principles, as they had operated both in the resistance to king James, and in the subsequent settlement; and to fix them in the extent and with the limitations with which it was meant they should be understood by posterity. The ministers and managers for the commons were persons who had, many of them, an active share in the revolution. Most of them had seen it at an age capable of reflection. The grand event, and all the discussions which led to it, and followed it, were then alive in the memory and conversation of all men. The managers for the commons must be supposed to have spoken on that subject the prevalent ideas of the leading party in the commons, and of the whig ministry. Undoubtedly they spoke

also their own private opinions; and the private opinions of such men are not without weight. They were not *umbratiles doctores*, men who had studied a free constitution only in its anatomy, and upon dead systems. They knew it alive and in action.

In this proceeding, the whig principles, as applied to the revolution and settlement, are to be found, or they are to be found nowhere. I wish the whig readers of this appeal first to turn to Mr. Burke's Reflections, from page 50 to page 83; and then to attend to the following extracts from the trial of Dr. Sacheverel. After this, they will consider two things; first, whether the doctrine in Mr. Burke's Reflections be consonant to that of the whigs of that period; and secondly, whether they choose to abandon the principles which belonged to the progenitors of some of them, and to the predecessors of them all, and to learn new principles of whiggism, imported from France, and disseminated in this country from dissenting pulpits, from federation societies, and from the pamphlets, which (as containing the political creed of those synods) are industriously circulated in all parts of the two kingdoms. This is their affair, and they will make their option.

These new whigs hold, that the sovereignty, whether exercised by one or many, did not only originate *from* the people (a position not denied, nor worth denying or assenting to,) but that, in the people the same sovereignty constantly and unalienably resides; that the people may lawfully depose kings, not only for misconduct, but without any misconduct at all; that they may set up any new fashion of government for themselves, or continue without any government at their pleasure; that the people are essentially their own rule, and their will the measure of their conduct; that the tenure of magistracy is not a proper subject of contract; because magistrates have duties, but no rights; and that if a contract *de facto* is made with them in one age, allowing that it binds at all, it only binds those who are immediately concerned in it, but does not pass to posterity. These doctrines concern-

ing the *people* (a term which they are far from accurately defining, but by which, from many circumstances, it is plain enough they mean their own faction, if they should grow by early arming, by treachery, or violence, into the prevailing force,) tend, in my opinion, to the utter subversion, not only of all government, in all modes, and to all stable securities to rational freedom, but to all the rules and principles of morality itself.

I assert, that the ancient whigs held doctrines, totally different from those I have last mentioned. I assert, that the foundations laid down by the commons, on the trial of Dr. Sacheverel, for justifying the revolution of 1688, are the very same laid down in Mr. Burke's Reflections; that is to say,—a breach of the *original contract*, implied and expressed in the constitution of this country, as a scheme of government fundamentally and inviolably fixed in king, lords, and commons. That the fundamental subversion of this ancient constitution, by one of its parts, having been attempted, and in effect accomplished, justified the revolution. That it was justified *only* upon the *necessity* of the case; as the *only* means left for the recovery of that *ancient* constitution, formed by the *original contract* of the British state; as well as for the future preservation of the *same* government. These are the points to be proved.

A general opening to the charge against Dr. Sacheverel was made by the attorney-general, sir John Montagu; but as there is nothing in that opening speech which tends very accurately to settle the principle upon which the whigs proceeded in the prosecution (the plan of the speech not requiring it) I proceed to that of Mr. Lechmere, the manager, who spoke next after him. The following are extracts, given, not in the exact order in which they stand in the printed trial, but in that which is thought most fit to bring the ideas of the whig commons distinctly under our view.

MR. LECHMERE.*

'It becomes an *indispensable* duty upon us, who appear in the name and on the behalf of all the commons of Great Britain, not only to demand your lordships' justice on such a criminal [Dr. Sacheverel] *but clearly and openly to assert our foundations.*' — — —

'The nature of our constitution is that of a *limited monarchy;* wherein the supreme power is communicated and divided between queen, lords, and commons; though the executive power and administration be wholly in the crown. The terms of such a constitution do not only suppose, but express, an original contract between the crown and the people; by which that supreme power was (by mutual consent, and not by accident,) limited, and lodged in more hands than one. And *the uniform preservation of such a constitution for so many ages, without any fundamental change, demonstrates to your lordships the continuance of the same contract.*' — — —

'The consequences of such a frame of government are obvious. That the *laws* are the rule to both; the common measure of the power of the crown, and of the obedience of the subject; and if the executive part endeavors the *subversion and total destruction of the government*, the original contract is thereby broke, and the right of allegiance ceases; that part of the government, thus *fundamentally* injured, hath a right to save or recover *that* constitution in which it had an original interest.' — — —

'The *necessary* means (which is the phrase used by the commons in their first article) are words made choice of by them *with the greatest caution.* Those means are described (in the preamble to their charge) to be, that glorious enterprise, which his late majesty undertook, with an armed force, to deliver this kingdom from popery and arbitrary power;

* State Trials, vol. v. p. 651.

the concurrence of many subjects of the realm, who came over with him in that enterprise, and of many others of *all ranks and orders*, who appeared in arms in many parts of the kingdom in aid of that enterprise.

'These were the *means* that brought about the revolution; and which the act that passed soon after, *declaring the rights and liberties of the subject, and settling the succession of the crown*, intends, when his late majesty is therein called the *glorious instrument of delivering the kingdom;* and which the commons, in the last part of their first article, express by the word *resistance.*

'But the commons, who will never be unmindful of the *allegiance* of the subjects to the *crown* of this realm, judged it highly incumbent upon them, out of regard to the *safety of her majesty's person and government, and the ancient and legal constitution of this kingdom*, to call that resistance the *necessary* means; thereby plainly founding that power, right, and resistance, which was exercised by the people at the time of the happy revolution, and which the duties of *self-preservation* and religion called them to, *upon the* NECESSITY *of the case, and at the same time effectually securing her majesty's government, and the due allegiance of all her subjects.*' — — —

'The nature of such an *original contract* of government proves, that there is not only a power in the people, who have *inherited this freedom*, to assert their own title to it; but they are bound in duty to transmit the *same* constitution to their posterity also.'

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Mr. Lechmere made a second speech. Notwithstanding the clear and satisfactory manner in which he delivered himself in his first upon this arduous question, he thinks himself bound again distinctly to assert the same foundation; and to justify the revolution on the *case of necessity only*, upon principles perfectly coinciding with those laid down in Mr. Burke's letter on the French affairs.

MR. LECHMERE.

'Your lordships were acquainted, in opening the charge, with how *great caution*, and with what unfeigned regard to her majesty and her government, and the *duty and allegiance* of her subjects, the commons made use of the words *necessary means*, to express the resistance that was made use of to bring about the revolution, and with the condemning of which the doctor is charged by this article; not doubting but that the honor and justice of that resistance, *from the necessity of that case, and to which alone we have strictly confined ourselves*, when duly considered, would confirm and strengthen, and be understood to be an effectual security for an allegiance of the subject to the crown of this realm, *in every other case where there is not the same necessity;* and that the right of the people to *self-defence, and preservation of their liberties, by resistance, as their last remedy, is the result of a case of such* necessity only, *and by which the* original contract *between king and people, is broke. This was the principle laid down and carried through all that was said with respect to* allegiance; *and on* which foundation, *in the name and on the behalf of all the commons of Great Britain, we assert and justify that resistance by which the late happy revolution was brought about.*' — — —

'It appears to your lordships and the world, that *breaking the original contract between king and people*, were the words made choice of by that house of commons, [the house of commons which originated the declaration of right] with the *greatest deliberation and judgment*, and approved of by your lordships, in that first and fundamental step towards the *re-establishment of the government*, which had received so great a shock from the evil counsels which had been given to that unfortunate prince.'

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Sir John Hawles, another of the managers, follows the steps of his brethren, positively affirming the doctrine of non-re-

sistance to government to be the general, moral, religious, and political rule for the subject; and justifying the revolution on the same principle with Mr. Burke, that is, *as an exception from necessity.*—Indeed he carries the doctrine on the general idea of non-resistance much further than Mr. Burke has done; and full as far as it can perhaps be supported by any duty of *perfect obligation;* however noble and heroic it may be, in many cases, to suffer death rather than disturb the tranquillity of our country.

SIR JOHN HAWLES.*

'Certainly it must be granted, that the doctrine that commands obedience to the supreme power, *though in things contrary to nature,* even to suffer death, which is the highest injustice that can be done a man, rather than make an opposition to the supreme power [is reasonable];† because the death of one, or some few private persons, is a less evil than *disturbing the whole government;* that law must needs be understood to forbid the doing or saying any thing to disturb the government; the rather because the obeying that law cannot be pretended to be against nature: and the doctor's refusing to obey that implicit law, is the reason for which he is now prosecuted; though he would have it believed, that the reason he is now prosecuted, was for the doctrine he asserted of obedience to the supreme power; which he might have preached as long as he had pleased, and the commons would have taken no offence at it, if he had stopped there, and not have taken upon him, on that pretence or occasion, to have cast odious colors upon the revolution.'

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General Stanhope was among the managers. He begins his speech by a reference to the opinion of his fellow managers,

* Page 676.

† The words necessary to the completion of the sentence are wanting in the printed trial—but the construction of the sentence, as well as the foregoing part of the speech, justify the insertion of some such supplemental words as the above.

which he hoped had put beyond all doubt the limits and qualifications that the commons had placed to their doctrines concerning the revolution; yet not satisfied with this general reference, after condemning the principle of non-resistance, which is asserted in the sermon *without any exception*, and stating, that under the specious pretence of preaching a peaceable doctrine, Sacheverel and the jacobites meant in reality to excite a rebellion in favor of the pretender, he explicitly limits his ideas of resistance with the boundaries laid down by his colleagues and by Mr. Burke.

GENERAL STANHOPE.

'The constitution of England is founded upon *compact;* and the subjects of this kingdom have, in their several public and private capacities, *as* legal a title to what are their rights by law, *as* a prince to the possession of his crown.

'Your lordships, and most that hear me, are witnesses, and must remember the *necessities* of those times which brought about the revolution: that *no other* remedy was left to preserve our religion and liberties; *that resistance was* necessary, *and consequently just.*' — — —

'Had the doctor, in the remaining part of his sermon, preached up peace, quietness and the like, and shewn how happy we are under her majesty's administration, and exhorted obedience to it, he had never been called to answer a charge at your lordships' bar. But the tenor of all his subsequent discourse is one continued invective against the government.'

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Mr. Walpole (afterwards Sir Robert) was one of the managers on this occasion. He was an honorable man and a sound whig. He was not, as the jacobites and discontented whigs of his time have represented him, and as ill-informed people still represent him, a prodigal and corrupt minister. They charged him in their libels and seditious conversations as having first reduced corruption to a system. Such was

their cant. But he was far from governing by corruption. He governed by party attachments. The charge of systematic corruption is less applicable to him, perhaps, than to any minister who ever served the crown for so great a length of time. He gained over very few from the opposition. Without being a genius of the first class, he was an intelligent, prudent, and safe minister. He loved peace; and he helped to communicate the same disposition to nations at least as warlike and restless as that in which he had the chief direction of affairs. Though he served a master who was fond of martial fame, he kept all the establishments very low. The land tax continued at two shillings in the pound for the greater part of his administration. The other impositions were moderate. The profound repose, the equal liberty, the firm protection of just laws during the long period of his power, were the principal causes of that prosperity which afterwards took such rapid strides towards perfection; and which furnished to this nation ability to acquire the military glory which it has since obtained, as well as to bear the burthens, the cause and consequence of that warlike reputation. With many virtues, public and private, he had his faults; but his faults were superficial. A careless, coarse, and over familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in the public opinion; and those through which his enemies obtained the greatest advantage over him. But justice must be done. The prudence, steadiness, and vigilance of that man, joined to the greatest possible lenity in his character and his politics, preserved the crown to this royal family; and with it, their laws and liberties to this country. Walpole had no other plan of defence for the revolution, than that of the other managers, and of Mr. Burke; and he gives full as little countenance to any arbitrary attempts, on the part of restless and factious men, for framing new governments according to their fancies.

MR. WALPOLE.

'Resistance is no where enacted to be legal, but subjected, by all the laws now in being, to the greatest penalties. It is what is not, cannot, nor ought ever to be described, or affirmed, in any positive law, to be excusable: when, and upon what *never-to-be-expected* occasions, it may be exercised, no man can foresee; *and it ought never to be thought of, but when an utter subversion of the laws of the realm threatens the whole frame of our constitution, and no redress can otherwise be hoped for.* It therefore does, and *ought for ever*, to stand, in the eye and letter of the law, as the *highest offence.* But because any man, or party of men, may not, out of folly or wantonness, commit treason, or make their own discontents, ill principles, or disguised affections to another interest, a pretence to resist the supreme power, will it follow from thence that the *utmost necessity* ought not to engage a nation *in its own defence, for the preservation of the whole?*'

* * * * *

Sir Joseph Jekyl was, as I have always heard and believed, as nearly as any individual could be, the very standard of whig principles in his age. He was a learned, and an able man; full of honor, integrity, and public spirit; no lover of innovation; nor disposed to change his solid principles for the giddy fashion of the hour. Let us hear this whig.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'In clearing up and vindicating the justice of the revolution, which was the second thing proposed, it is far from the intent of the commons to state the *limits and bounds* of the subject's submission to the sovereign. That which the law hath been wisely silent in, the commons desire to be silent in too; nor will they put *any* case of a justifiable resistance, but that of the revolution only; and *they persuade themselves*

that the doing right to that resistance will be so far from promoting popular license or confusion, that it will have a contrary effect, and be a means of settling men's minds in the love of, and veneration for the laws; to rescue and secure which, was the ONLY *aim and intention of those concerned in resistance.*'

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Dr. Sacheverel's counsel defended him on this principle, namely—that whilst he enforced from the pulpit the general doctrine of non-resistance, he was not obliged to take notice of the theoretic limits which ought to modify that doctrine. Sir Joseph Jekyl, in his reply, whilst he controverts its application to the doctor's defence, fully admits and even enforces the principle itself, and supports the revolution of 1688, as he and all the managers had done before, exactly upon the same grounds on which Mr. Burke has built, in his reflections on the French revolution.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'If the doctor had pretended to have stated the particular bounds and limits of non-resistance, and told the people in what cases they might, or might not resist, *he would have been much to blame;* nor was one word said in the articles, or by the managers, as if that was expected from him: but, *on the contrary, we have insisted, that in NO case can resistance be lawful, but in case of* extreme necessity; *and where the constitution cannot otherwise be preserved; and such necessity ought to be plain and obvious to the sense and judgment of the whole nation; and this was the case at the revolution.*'

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The counsel for Dr. Sacheverel, in defending their client, were driven in reality to abandon the fundamental principles of his doctrine, and to confess, that an exception to the general doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance did exist in the case of the revolution. This the managers for the commons considered as having gained their cause; as their having

obtained *the whole* of what they contended for. They congratulated themselves and the nation on a civil victory, as glorious and as honorable as any that had obtained in arms during the reign of triumphs.

Sir Joseph Jekyl, in his reply to Harcourt, and the other great men who conducted the cause for the tory side, spoke in the following memorable terms, distinctly stating the whole of what the whig house of commons contended for, in the name of all their constituents:—

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'My lords, the concessions [the concessions of Sacheverel's counsel] are these:—That *necessity* creates an *exception* to the general rule of submission to the prince; that such exception is understood or implied in the laws that require such submission;—and that *the case of the revolution was a case of necessity.*

'These are concessions *so ample*, and do so *fully* answer the drift of the commons in this article, and are to *the utmost extent of their meaning in it*, that I can't forbear congratulating them upon this success of their impeachment; that in full parliament, this erroneous doctrine of *unlimited* non-resistance is given up and disclaimed. And may it not, in after ages, be an addition to the glories of this bright reign, that so many of those who are honored with being in her majesty's service have been at your lordships' bar, thus successfully contending for the *national* rights of her people, and proving they are not precarious or remediless?

'But to return to these concessions; I must appeal to your lordships, whether they are not a *total departure* from the doctor's answer.'

* * * * *

I now proceed to shew that the whig managers for the commons meant to preserve the government on a firm foundation, by asserting the perpetual validity of the settlement then made, and its coercive power upon posterity. I mean

to shew that they gave no sort of countenance to any doctrine tending to impress the *people*, taken separately from the legislature which includes the crown, with an idea that *they* had acquired a moral or civil competence to alter (without breach of the original compact on the part of the king) the succession to the crown, at their pleasure; much less that they had acquired any right, in the case of such an event as caused the revolution, to set up any new form of government. The author of the Reflections, I believe, thought that no man of common understanding could oppose to this doctrine, the ordinary sovereign power, as declared in the act of queen Anne. That is, that the kings or queens of the realm, with the consent of parliament, are competent to regulate and to settle the succession of the crown. This power is, and ever was, inherent in the supreme sovereignty; and was not, as the political divines vainly talk, acquired by the revolution. It is declared in the old statute of queen Elizabeth. Such a power must reside in the complete sovereignty of every kingdom; and it is in fact exercised in all of them. But this right of *competence* in the legislature, not in the people, is by the legislature itself to be exercised with *sound discretion;* that is to say, it is to be exercised or not, in conformity to the fundamental principles of this government; to the rules of moral obligation; and to the faith of pacts, either contained in the nature of the transaction, or entered into by the body corporate of the kingdom; which body, in juridical construction, never dies; and in fact never loses its members at once by death.

Whether this doctrine is reconcilable to the modern philosophy of government, I believe the author neither knows nor cares; as he has little respect for any of that sort of philosophy. This may be because his capacity and knowledge do not reach to it. If such be the case, he cannot be blamed, if he acts on the sense of that incapacity; he cannot be blamed, if in the most arduous and critical questions which can possibly arise, and which affect to the quick the vital parts of our constitution, he takes the side which leans most to safety

and settlement; that he is resolved not "to be wise beyond what is written" in the legislative record and practice; that when doubts arise on them, he endeavors to interpret one statute by another; and to reconcile them all to established recognised morals, and to the general ancient known policy of the laws of England. Two things are equally evident, the first is, that the legislature possesses the power of regulating the succession of the crown; the second, that in the exercise of that right it has uniformly acted as if under the *restraints* which the author has stated. That author makes what the ancients call *mos majorum*, not indeed his sole, but certainly his principal rule of policy, to guide his judgment in whatever regards our laws. Uniformity and analogy can be preserved in them by this process only. That point being fixed, and laying fast hold of a strong bottom, our speculations may swing in all directions, without public detriment, because they will ride with sure anchorage.

In this manner these things have been always considered by our ancestors. There are some indeed who have the art of turning the very acts of parliament which were made for securing the hereditary succession in the present royal family, by rendering it penal to doubt the validity of those acts of parliament, into an instrument for defeating all their ends and purposes: but upon grounds so very foolish, that it is not worth while to take further notice of such sophistry.

To prevent any unnecessary subdivision, I shall here put together what may be necessary to shew the perfect agreement of the whigs with Mr. Burke, in his assertions, that the revolution made no "essential change in the constitution of the monarchy, or in any of its ancient, sound, and legal principles; that the succession was settled in the Hanover family, upon the idea, and in the mode of an hereditary succession qualified with Protestantism; that it was not settled upon *elective* principles, in any sense of the word *elective*, or under any modification or description of *election* whatsoever; but, on the contrary, that the nation, after the revolution, renewed by a fresh compact the spirit of the original compact of the

state, binding itself, *both in its existing members and all its posterity*, to adhere to the settlement of an hereditary succession in the Protestant line, drawn from James the First, as the stock of inheritance."

SIR JOHN HAWLES.

'If he [Dr. Sacheverel] is of the opinion he pretends, I cannot imagine how it comes to pass, that he that pays that deference to the supreme power has preached so directly contrary to the determinations of the supreme power in this government; he very well knowing that the lawfulness of the revolution, and of the means whereby it was brought about, has already been determined by the aforesaid acts of parliament: and do it in the worst manner he could invent. *For questioning the right to the crown here in England, has procured the shedding of more blood, and caused more slaughter, than all the other matters tending to disturbances in the government, put together.* If, therefore, the doctrine which the apostles had laid down, was only to continue the peace of the world, as thinking the death of some few particular persons better to be borne with than a civil war; sure it is the highest breach of that law to question the first principles of this government.'

'If the doctor had been contented with the liberty he took of preaching up the duty of passive obedience, in the most extensive manner he had thought fit, and would have stopped there, your lordships would not have had the trouble, in relation to him, that you now have; but it is plain, that he preached up his absolute and unconditional obedience, not *to continue the peace and tranquillity of this nation, but to set the subjects at strife, and to raise a war in the bowels of this nation;* and it is for *this* that he is now prosecuted; though he would fain have it believed that the prosecution was for preaching the peaceable doctrine of absolute obedience.'

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SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'The whole tenor of the administration, then in being, was agreed by all to be *a total departure from the constitution.* The nation was at that time united in that opinion, all but the criminal part of it. And as the nation joined in the judgment of their disease, so they did in the remedy. *They saw there was no remedy left but the last;* and when that remedy took place, *the whole frame of government was restored entire and unhurt.** This shewed the excellent temper the nation was in at that time, that, after such provocations from an abuse of the regal power, and such a convulsion, *no one part of the constitution was altered, or suffered the least damage: but, on the contrary, the whole received new life and vigor.*'

* * * * * *

The tory counsel for Dr. Sacheverel having insinuated, that a great and essential alteration in the constitution had been wrought by the revolution, Sir Joseph Jekyl is so strong on this point, that he takes fire even at the insinuation of his being of such an opinion.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'If the Doctor instructed his counsel to insinuate that there was *any innovation in the constitution, wrought by the revolution, it is an addition to his crime. The revolution did not in-*

* "What we did was, in truth and substance and in a constitutional light, a revolution, not made, but prevented. We took solid securities; we settled doubtful questions; we corrected anomalies in our law. In the stable fundamental parts of our constitution, we made no revolution; no, nor any alteration at all. We did not impair the monarchy. Perhaps it might be shewn that we strengthened it very considerably The nation kept the same ranks, the same orders, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property, the same subordinations, the same order in the law, in the revenue, and in the magistracy; the same lords, the same commons, the same corporations, the same electors." *Mr. Burke's speech in the house of commons, 9th February,* 1790. It appears how exactly he coincides in every thing with Sir Joseph Jekyl.

troduce any innovation; it was a restoration of the ancient fundamental constitution of the kingdom, and giving it its proper force and energy.'

* * * * * *

The solicitor general, Sir Robert Eyre, distinguishes expressly the case of the revolution, and its principles, from a proceeding at pleasure, on the part of the people, to change their ancient constitution, and to frame a new government for themselves. He distinguishes it with the same care from the principles of regicide, and republicanism, and the sorts of resistance condemned by the doctrines of the church of England, and, which ought to be condemned, by the doctrines of all churches professing Christianity.

MR. SOLICITOR GENERAL, SIR ROBERT EYRE.

'The resistance at the revolution, which was founded in *unavoidable necessity*, could be no defence to a man that was attacked *for asserting that the people might cancel their allegiance at pleasure, or dethrone and murder their sovereign by a judiciary sentence.* For it can never be inferred from the lawfulness of resistance, at a time when *a total subversion of the government both in church and state was intended*, that a people may take up arms, and *call their sovereign to account at pleasure*; and, therefore, since *the revolution could be of no service in giving the least color for asserting any such wicked principle*, the doctor could never intend to put it into the mouths of those new preachers, and new politicians, for a defence; unless it be his opinion, that the resistance at the revolution can bear any parallel with the *execrable murder of the royal martyr, so justly detested by the whole nation.*

'It is plain that the doctor is not impeached for preaching a general doctrine, and enforcing the general duty of obedience, but for preaching against an *excepted case, after he has stated the exception.* He is not impeached for preaching the general doctrine of obedience, and the utter illegality of resistance upon any pretence whatsoever; but because, hav-

ing first laid down the general doctrine as true, without any exception, *he states the excepted case*, the revolution, in express terms, as an objection; and then assuming the consideration of that excepted case, denies there was any resistance in the revolution; and asserts, that to impute resistance to the revolution, would cast black and odious colors upon it. This is not preaching the doctrine of non-resistance, in the *general* terms used by the homilies, and the fathers of the church, where cases of necessity may be *understood to be excepted by a tacit implication, as the counsel have allowed;* but is preaching directly against the resistance at the revolution, which, in the course of this debate, has been all along admitted to *be necessary and just*, and can have no other meaning than to bring a dishonor upon the revolution, and an odium upon those great and illustrious persons, *those friends to the monarchy and the church, that assisted in bringing it about.* For had the doctor intended any thing else, he would have treated the case of the revolution in a different manner, and have given *it the true and fair answer;* he would have said, that the resistance at the revolution was *of absolute necessity, and the only means left to revive the constitution; and must therefore be taken as an excepted case*, and could never come within the reach and intention of the general doctrine of the church.

'Your lordships take notice on what grounds the doctor continues to assert the same position in his answer. But is it not most evident, that the general exhortations to be met with in the homilies of the church of England, and such like declarations in the statutes of the kingdom, are meant only as rules for the civil obedience of the subject to the legal administration of the supreme power in *ordinary cases?* And it is equally absurd, to construe any words in a positive law to authorize the destruction of the whole, as to expect that king, lords, and commons should, in express terms of law, declare *such an ultimate resort as the right of resistance, at a time when the case supposes that the force of all laws is ceased.**

* See Reflections, p. 121—2—3.

'The commons must always resent, with the utmost detestation and abhorrence, every position that may shake the authority of that act of parliament, whereby the crown is settled upon her majesty, *and whereby the lords spiritual and temporal and commons do, in the name of all the people of England, most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities, to her majesty*, which this general principle of absolute non-resistance must certainly shake.

'For, if the resistance at the revolution was illegal, the revolution settled in usurpation, and this act can have no greater force and authority than an act passed under an usurper.

'And the commons take leave to observe, that the authority of the parliamentary settlement is a matter of the greatest consequence to maintain, in a case where the hereditary right to the crown is contested.

'It appears by the several instances mentioned in the act declaring the rights and liberties of the subject, and settling the succession of the crown, that at the time of the revolution there was *a total subversion of the constitution of government both in church and state, which is a case that the laws of England could never suppose, provide for, or have in view.*'

* * * * * *

Sir Joseph Jekyl, so often quoted, considered the preservation of the monarchy, and of the rights and prerogatives of the crown, as essential objects with all sound whigs; and that they were bound, not only to maintain them when injured or invaded, but to exert themselves as much for their re-establishment, if they should happen to be overthrown by popular fury, as any of their own more immediate and popular rights and privileges, if the latter should be at any time subverted by the crown. For this reason he puts the cases of the *revolution* and the *restoration*, exactly upon the same footing. He plainly marks, that it was the object of all honest men, not to sacrifice one part of the constitution to another; and much more, not to sacrifice any of them to visionary theories of the rights of man; but to preserve our whole inheritance in the

constitution, in all its members and all its relations, entire, and unimpaired, from generation to generation. In this Mr. Burke exactly agrees with him.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'Nothing is plainer than that the people have a right to the laws and the constitution. This right the nation hath asserted, and recovered out of the hands of those who had dispossessed them of it at several times. There are of this *two famous instances* in the knowledge of the present age; I mean that of the *restoration*, and that of the *revolution;* in both of these great events were the *regal power*, and the *rights of the people* recovered. And it is *hard to say in which the people have the greatest interest; for the commons are sensible that there is not one legal power belonging to the crown, but they have an interest in it; and I doubt not but they will always be as careful to support the rights of the crown as their own privileges.*'

The other whig managers regarded (as he did) the overturning of the monarchy by a republican faction with the very same horror and detestation with which they regarded the destruction of the privileges of the people by an arbitrary monarch.

MR. LECHMERE,

Speaking of our constitution, states it as 'a constitution which happily recovered itself, at the restoration, from the confusions and disorders which *the horrid and detestable proceedings of faction and usurpation had thrown it into*, and which, after many convulsions and struggles, was providentially saved at the late happy revolution; and, by the many good laws passed since that time, stands now upon a firmer foundation: together with the most comfortable prospect of *security to all posterity*, by the settlement of the crown in the protestant line.'

* * * * * *

I mean now to shew that the whigs, (if Sir Joseph Jekyl was one) and if he spoke in conformity to the sense of the whig house of commons and the whig ministry who employed him, did carefully guard against any presumption that might arise from the repeal of the non-resistance oath of Charles the Second, as if, at the revolution, the ancient principles of our government were at all changed—or that republican doctrines were countenanced—or any sanction given to seditious proceedings upon general undefined ideas of misconduct —or for changing the form of government—or for resistance upon any other ground than the *necessity* so often mentioned for the purpose of self-preservation. It will shew still more clearly the equal care of the then whigs, to prevent either the regal power from being swallowed up on pretence of popular rights, or the popular rights from being destroyed on pretence of regal prerogatives.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYL.

'Further, I desire it may be considered, that these legislators [the legislators who framed the non-resistance oath of Charles the Second] were guarding against the consequences of those *pernicious and antimonarchical principles, which had been broached a little before in this nation;* and those large declarations in favor of *non-resistance* were made to encounter or obviate the *mischief* of those principles; as appears by the preamble to the fullest of those acts, which is the *militia act*, in the 13th and 14th of king Charles the Second. The words of that act are these: *And, during the late usurped governments, many evil and rebellious principles have been instilled into the minds of the people of this kingdom, which may break forth, unless prevented, to the disturbance of the peace and quiet thereof: Be it therefore enacted, &c.* Here your lordships may see the reason that inclined those legislators to express themselves in such a manner against resistance. *They had seen the regal rights swallowed up, under the pretence of popular ones;* and it is no imputation on them that they did not

then foresee a *quite different case*, as was that of the revolution; where, under the pretence of regal authority, a total subversion of the rights of the subject was advanced, and in a manner effected. And this may serve to shew, that it was not the design of those legislators to condemn resistance, in a case *of absolute necessity, for preserving the constitution*, when they were guarding against principles which had so lately destroyed it.

'As to the truth of the doctrine in this declaration which was repealed, *I will admit it to be as true as the doctor's counsel assert it; that is, with an exception of cases of necessity;* and it was not repealed because it was false, *understanding it with that restriction;* but it was repealed because it might be interpreted in *an unconfined sense, and exclusive of that restriction;* and being so understood, would reflect on the justice of the revolution: and this the legislature had at heart, and were very jealous of; and by this repeal of that declaration, gave a parliamentary or legislative admonition, against asserting this doctrine of non-resistance *in an unlimited sense.*' — —

'Though the general doctrine of non-resistance, the doctrine of the church of England, as stated in her homilies, or elsewhere delivered, by which the general duty of subjects to the higher powers is taught, be owned to be, as unquestionably it is, *a godly and wholesome doctrine;* though this general doctrine has been constantly inculcated by the reverend fathers of the church, dead and living, and preached by them as a preservative against the popish doctrine of deposing princes, and as the ordinary rule of obedience; and though the same doctrine has been preached, maintained, and avowed by our most orthodox and able divines from the time of the reformation; and how *innocent a man* Dr. Sacheverel had been, if, *with an honest and well-meant* zeal, he had preached the same doctrine in the same general terms in which he found it delivered by the apostles of Christ, as taught by the homilies, and the reverend fathers of our church, and, in imitation of those great examples, had only pressed the general duty of

obedience, and the illegality of resistance, without taking notice of any exception.'

* * * * *

Another of the managers for the house of commons, Sir John Holland, was not less careful in guarding against a confusion of the principles of the revolution, with any loose general doctrines of a right in the individual, or even in the people, to undertake for themselves, on any prevalent temporary opinions of convenience or improvement, any fundamental change in the constitution, or to fabricate a new government for themselves, and thereby to disturb the public peace, and to unsettle the ancient constitution of this kingdom.

SIR JOHN HOLLAND.

'The commons would not be understood, as if they were pleading for a licentious resistance; as if *subjects* were left to *their* good will and pleasure, when they are to *obey*, and when to *resist*. No, my lords, they know they are *obliged by all the ties of social creatures and Christians, for wrath and conscience sake, to submit to their sovereign.* The commons do not abet *humorsome factious arms:* they aver them to be *rebellious.* But yet they maintain, that that resistance at the revolution which was so *necessary, was lawful and just from that necessity.*

'These general rules of obedience, may, upon a *real necessity*, admit a lawful *exception;* and such a *necessary exception* we assert the revolution to be.

''Tis with this view of *necessity* only, *absolute necessity* of preserving our laws, liberties, and religion; 'tis with *this limitation* that we desire to be understood, when any of us speak of resistance in general. The *necessity* of the resistance at the revolution, was at that time obvious to every man.'

* * * * *

I shall conclude these extracts with a reference to the Prince of Orange's declaration, in which he gives the nation the fullest assurance that in his enterprise he was far from the intention of introducing any change whatever in the funda-

mental law and constitution of the state. He considered the object of his enterprise, not to be a precedent for further revolutions, but that it was the great end of his expedition to make such revolutions, so far as human power and wisdom could provide, unnecessary.

Extracts from the Prince of Orange's Declaration.

'*All magistrates, who have been* unjustly turned out, shall *forthwith resume their former* employments, as well as all the boroughs of England shall return again to *their ancient prescriptions and charters:* and more particularly, that *the ancient* charter of the great and famous city of London shall be again in force. And that the writs for the members of parliament shall be addressed to the *proper officers according to law and custom.*'———

'And for the doing of all other things, which the two houses of parliament shall find necessary for the peace, honor, and safety of the nation, so that there may *be no danger of the nation's falling, at any time hereafter, under arbitrary government.*'

Extract from the Prince of Orange's additional Declaration.

'We are confident that no persons can have *such hard thoughts of us,* as to imagine that we have any other design in this undertaking, than to procure a settlement of the *religion, and of the liberties and properties of the subjects, upon so sure a foundation, that there may be no danger of the nation's relapsing into the like miseries at any time hereafter.* And, as the forces that we have brought along with us are utterly disproportioned to that wicked design of conquering the nation, if we were capable of intending it; *so the great numbers of the principal nobility and gentry, that are men of eminent quality and estates, and persons of known integrity and zeal, both for the religion and government of England, many of them also being distinguished by their constant fidelity to the crown,* who do both accompany us in this expedition, and have earn-

estly solicited us to it, will cover us from all such malicious insinuations.'

In the spirit, and upon one occasion in the words,* of this declaration, the statutes passed in that reign made such provisions for preventing these dangers, that scarcely any thing short of combination of king, lords, and commons, for the destruction of the liberties of the nation, can in any probability make us liable to similar perils. In that dreadful, and, I hope, not to be looked-for case, any opinion of a right to make revolutions, grounded on this precedent, would be but a poor resource. Dreadful indeed would be our situation.

These are the doctrines held by *the whigs of the revolution*, delivered with as much solemnity, and as authentically at least, as any political dogmas were ever promulgated from the beginning of the world. If there be any difference between their tenets and those of Mr. Burke it is, that the old whigs oppose themselves still more strongly than he does against the doctrines which are now propagated with so much industry by those who would be thought their successors.

It will be said, perhaps, that the old whigs, in order to guard themselves against popular odium, pretended to assert tenets contrary to those which they secretly held. This, if true, would prove, what Mr. Burke has uniformly asserted, that the extravagant doctrines which he meant to expose, were disagreeable to the body of the people; who, though they perfectly abhor a despotic government, certainly approached more nearly to the love of mitigated monarchy, than to any thing which bears the appearance even of the best republic. But if these old whigs deceived the people, their conduct was unaccountable indeed. They exposed their power, as every one conversant in history knows, to the greatest peril, for the propagation of opinions which, on this hypothesis, they did not hold. It is a new kind of martyrdom. This supposition does as little credit to their integrity as their wisdom: it makes them at once hypocrites and fools. I think of those

* Declaration of Right.

great men very differently. I hold them to have been, what the world thought them, men of deep understanding, open sincerity, and clear honor. However, be that matter as it may; what these old whigs pretended to be, Mr. Burke is. This is enough for him.

I do indeed admit, that though Mr. Burke has proved that his opinions were those of the old whig party, solemnly declared by one house, in effect and substance by both houses of parliament, this testimony standing by itself will form no proper defence for his opinions, if he and the old whigs were both of them in the wrong. But it is his present concern, not to vindicate these old whigs, but to shew his agreement with them. He appeals to them as judges: he does not vindicate them as culprits. It is current that these old politicians knew little of the rights of men; that they lost their way by groping about in the dark, and fumbling among rotten parchments and musty records. Great lights they say are lately obtained in the world; and Mr. Burke, instead of shrouding himself in exploded ignorance, ought to have taken advantage of the blaze of illumination which has been spread about him. It may be so. The enthusiasts of this time, it seems, like their predecessors in another faction of fanaticism, deal in lights. Hudibras pleasantly says of them, they

> "Have *lights*, where better eyes are blind,
> As pigs are said to see the wind."

The author of the Reflections has *heard* a great deal concerning the modern lights; but he has not yet had the good fortune to *see* much of them. He has read more than he can justify to any thing but the spirit of curiosity, of the works of these illuminators of the world. He has learned nothing from the far greater number of them, than a full certainty of their shallowness, levity, pride, petulance, presumption, and ignorance. Where the old authors whom he has read, and the old men whom he has conversed with, have left him in the dark, he is in the dark still. If others, however, have obtained any of this extraordinary light, they will use it to guide them in

their researches and their conduct. I have only to wish, that the nation may be as happy and as prosperous under the influence of the new light, as it has been in the sober shade of the old obscurity. As to the rest, it will be difficult for the author of the Reflections to conform to the principles of the avowed leaders of the party, until they appear otherwise than negatively. All we can gather from them is this, that their principles are diametrically opposite to his. This is all that we know from authority. Their negative declaration obliges me to have recourse to the books which contain positive doctrines. They are indeed, to those Mr. Burke holds, diametrically opposite; and if it be true, (as the oracles of the party have said, I hope hastily,) that their opinions differ so widely, it should seem they are the most likely to form the creed of the modern whigs.

I have stated what were the avowed sentiments of the old whigs, not in the way of argument, but narratively. It is but fair to set before the reader, in the same simple manner, the sentiments of the modern, to which they spare neither pains nor expense to make proselytes. I choose them from the books upon which most of that industry and expenditure in circulation have been employed; I choose them not from those who speak with a politic obscurity; not from those who only controvert the opinions of the old whigs, without advancing any of their own, but from those who speak plainly and affirmatively. The whig reader may make his choice between the two doctrines.

The doctrine then propagated by these societies, which gentlemen think they ought to be very tender in discouraging, as nearly as possible in their own words, is as follows: that in Great Britain we are not only without a good constitution, but that we have "no constitution." That, "though it is much talked about, no such thing as a constitution exists, or ever did exist; and consequently that *the people have a constitution yet to form;* that since William the Conqueror, the country has never yet *regenerated itself*, and is therefore without a constitution. That where it cannot be produced in a

visible form there is none. That a constitution is a thing antecedent to government; and that the constitution of a country is not the act of its government, but of a people constituting a government. That *every thing* in the English government is the reverse of what it ought to be, and what it is said to be in England. That the right of war and peace resides in a metaphor shewn at the tower, for sixpence or a shilling a-piece. That it signifies not where the right resides, whether in the crown or in parliament. War is the common harvest of those who participate in the division and expenditure of public money. That the portion of liberty enjoyed in England is just enough to enslave a country more productively than by despotism."

So far as to the general state of the British constitution. As to our house of lords, the chief virtual representative of our aristocracy, the great ground and pillar of security to the landed interest, and that main link by which it is connected with the law and the crown, these worthy societies are pleased to tell us, that, "whether we view aristocracy before, or behind, or side-ways, or any way else, domestically or publicly, it is still a *monster*. That aristocracy in France had one feature less in its countenance than what it has in some other countries; it did not compose a body of hereditary legislators. It was not a corporation of aristocracy;"—for such it seems that profound legislator M. de la Fayette describes the house of peers. "That it is kept up by family tyranny and injustice—that there is an unnatural unfitness in aristocracy to be legislators for a nation—that their ideas of distributive justice are corrupted at the very source; they begin life by trampling on all their younger brothers and sisters, and relations of every kind, and are taught and educated so to do. That the idea of an hereditary legislator is as absurd as an hereditary mathematician. That a body holding themselves unaccountable to any body, ought to be trusted by no body—that it is continuing the uncivilized principles of governments founded in conquest, and the base idea of man having a property in man, and governing him by a personal right—

that aristocracy has a tendency to degenerate the human species," &c. &c.

As to our law of primogeniture, which with few and inconsiderable exceptions is the standing law of all our landed inheritance, and which without question has a tendency, and I think a most happy tendency, to preserve a character of consequence, weight, and prevalent influence over others in the whole body of the landed interest, they call loudly for its destruction. They do this for political reasons that are very manifest. They have the confidence to say, "that it is a law against every law of nature, and nature herself calls for its destruction. Establish family justice, and aristocracy falls. By the aristocratical law of primogenitureship, in a family of six children, five are exposed. Aristocracy has never but *one* child. The rest are begotten to be devoured. They are thrown to the cannibal for prey, and the natural parent prepares the unnatural repast."

As to the house of commons, they treat it far worse than the house of lords or the crown have been ever treated. Perhaps they thought they had a greater right to take this amicable freedom with those of their own family. For many years it has been the perpetual theme of their invectives. "Mockery, insult, usurpation," are amongst the best names they bestow upon it. They damn it in the mass, by declaring "that it does not arise out of the inherent rights of the people, as the national assembly does in France, and whose name designates its original."

Of the charters and corporations, to whose rights, a few years ago, these gentlemen were so tremblingly alive, they say, "that when the people of England come to reflect upon them, they will, like France, annihilate those badges of oppression, those traces of a conquered nation."

As to our monarchy, they had formerly been more tender of that branch of the constitution, and for a good reason. The laws had guarded against all seditious attacks upon it, with a greater degree of strictness and severity. The tone of these gentlemen is totally altered since the French revolution.

They now declaim as vehemently against the monarchy, as on former occasions they treacherously flattered and soothed it.

"When we survey the wretched condition of man under the monarchical and hereditary systems of government, dragged from his home by one power, or driven by another, and impoverished by taxes more than by enemies, it becomes evident that those systems are bad, and that a general revolution in the principle and construction of governments is necessary.

"What is government more than the management of the affairs of a nation? It is not, and from its nature cannot be, the property of any particular man or family, but of the whole community, at whose expense it is supported; and though by force or contrivance it has been usurped into an inheritance, the usurpation cannot alter the right of things. Sovereignty, as a matter of right, appertains to the nation only, and not to any individual; and a nation has at all times an inherent indefeasible right to abolish any form of government it finds inconvenient, and establish such as accords with its interest, disposition, and happiness. The romantic and barbarous distinction of men into kings and subjects, though it may suit the condition of courtiers, cannot that of citizens; and is exploded upon the principle upon which governments are now founded. Every citizen is a member of the sovereignty, and, as such, can acknowledge no personal subjection; and his obedience can be only to the laws."

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Warmly recommending to us the example of France, where they have destroyed monarchy, they say—

"Monarchical sovereignty, the enemy of mankind, and the source of misery, is abolished; and sovereignty itself is restored to its natural and original place, the nation. Were this the case throughout Europe, the cause of wars would be taken away."

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"But, after all, what is this metaphor called a crown, or

rather what is monarchy? Is it a thing, or is it a name, or is it a fraud? Is it 'a contrivance of human wisdom," or of human craft, to obtain money from a nation under specious pretences? Is it a thing necessary to a nation? If it is, in what does that necessity consist, what service does it perform, what is its business, and what are its merits? Doth the virtue consist in the metaphor, or in the man? Doth the goldsmith that makes the crown make the virtue also? Doth it operate like Fortunatus's wishing cap, or Harlequin's wooden sword? Doth it make a man a conjuror? In fine, what is it? It appears to be a something going much out of fashion, falling into ridicule, and rejected in some countries both as unnecessary and expensive. In America it is considered as an absurdity; and in France it has so far declined, that the goodness of the man, and the respect for his personal character, are the only things that preserve the appearance of its existence."

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"Mr. Burke talks about what he calls an hereditary crown, as if it were some production of nature; or as if, like time, it had a power to operate, not only independently, but in spite of man; or as if it were a thing or a subject universally consented to. Alas! it has none of those properties, but is the reverse of them all. It is a thing in imagination, the propriety of which is more than doubted, and the legality of which in a few years will be denied."

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"If I ask the farmer, the manufacturer, the merchant, the tradesman, and down through all the occupations of life to the common laborer, what service monarchy is to him? he can give me no answer. If I ask him what monarchy is, he believes it is something like a sinecure."

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"The French constitution says, That the right of war and peace is in the nation. Where else should it reside, but in those who are to pay the expense?

"In England, this right is said to reside in a *metaphor*,

shewn at the tower for sixpence or a shilling a-piece: so are the lions; and it would be a step nearer to reason to say it resided in them, for any inanimate metaphor is no more than a hat or a cap. We can all see the absurdity of worshiping Aaron's molten calf, or Nebuchadnezzar's golden image; but why do men continue to practise themselves the absurdities they despise in others?"

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The revolution and Hanover succession had been objects of the highest veneration to the old whigs. They thought them not only proofs of the sober and steady spirit of liberty which guided their ancestors; but of their wisdom and provident care of posterity. The modern whigs have quite other notions of these events and actions. They do not deny that Mr. Burke has given truly the words of the acts of parliament which secured the succession, and the just sense of them. They attack not him but the law.

"Mr. Burke (say they) has done some service, not to his cause, but to his country, by bringing those clauses into public view. They serve to demonstrate how necessary it is at all times to watch against the attempted encroachment of power, and to prevent its running to excess. It is somewhat extraordinary, that the offence for which James II. was expelled, that of setting up power by *assumption*, should be re-acted, under another shape and form, by the parliament that expelled him. It shews that the rights of man were but imperfectly understood at the revolution; for certain it is, that the right which that parliament set up by *assumption* (for by delegation it had it not, and could not have it, because none could give it,) over the persons and freedom of posterity for ever, was of the same tyrannical unfounded kind which James attempted to set up over the parliament and the nation, and for which he was expelled. The only difference is, (for in principle they differ not) that the one was an usurper over the living, and the other over the unborn; and as the one has no better authority to stand upon

than the other, both of them must be equally null and void, and of no effect."

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"As the estimation of all things is by comparison, the revolution of 1688, however from circumstances it may have been exalted beyond its value, will find its level. It is already on the wane; eclipsed by the enlarging orb of reason, and the luminous revolutions of America and France. In less than another century, it will go, as well as Mr. Burke's labors, 'to the family vault of all the Capulets.' *Mankind will then scarcely believe that a country calling itself free, would send to Holland for a man, and clothe him with power, on purpose to put themselves in fear of him, and give him almost a million sterling a-year for leave to submit themselves and their posterity, like bond-men and bond-women, for ever.*"

"Mr Burke having said that the king holds his crown in contempt of the choice of the Revolution Society, who individually or collectively have not" (as most certainly they have not) "a vote for a king amongst them," they take occasion from thence to infer, that the king who does not hold his crown by election, despises the people.

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"The king of England," says he, "holds *his* crown (for it does not belong to the nation according to Mr. Burke) in *contempt* of the choice of the Revolution Society," &c.

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"As to who is king in England or elsewhere, or whether there is any king at all, or whether the people choose a Cherokee chief, or a Hessian hussar for a king, it is not a matter that I trouble myself about—be that to themselves; but with respect to the doctrine, so far as it relates to the rights of men and nations, it is as abominable as any thing ever uttered in the most enslaved country under heaven. Whether it sounds worse to my ear, by not being accustomed to hear such despotism, than what it does to the ear of another person, I am not so well a judge of; but of its abominable principle I am at no loss to judge."

These societies of modern whigs push their insolence as far as it can go. In order to prepare the minds of the people for treason and rebellion, they represent the king as tainted with principles of despotism, from the circumstance of his having dominions in Germany. In direct defiance of the most notorious truth, they describe his government there to be a despotism; whereas it is a free constitution, in which the states of the electorate have their part in the government; and this privilege has never been infringed by the king, or, that I have heard of, by any of his predecessors. The constitution of the electoral dominions has indeed a double control, both from the laws of the empire, and from the privileges of the country. Whatever rights the king enjoys as elector, have been always parentally exercised, and the calumnies of these scandalous societies have not been authorized by a single complaint of oppression.

"When Mr. Burke says that 'his majesty's heirs and successors, each in their time and order, will come to the crown with the *same contempt* of their choice with which his majesty has succeeded to that he wears,' it is saying too much even to the humblest individual in the country; part of whose daily labor goes towards making up the million sterling a year, which the country gives the person it styles a king. Government with insolence, is despotism; but when contempt is added, it becomes worse; and to pay for contempt, is the excess of slavery. This species of government comes from Germany; and reminds me of what one of the Brunswick soldiers told me, who was taken prisoner by the Americans in the late war: 'Ah!' said he, 'America is a fine free country, it is worth the people's fighting for; I know the difference by knowing my own: in my country, *if the prince says, Eat straw, we eat straw.*' God help that country, thought I, be it England, or elsewhere, whose liberties are to be protected by *German principles of government, and princes of Brunswick!*"

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"It is somewhat curious to observe, that although the peo-

ple of England have been in the habit of talking about kings, it is always a foreign house of kings; hating foreigners, yet governed by them. It is now the house of Brunswick, one of the petty tribes of Germany."

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"If government be what Mr. Burke describes it, 'a contrivance of human wisdom,' I might ask him, if wisdom was at such a low ebb in England, that it was become necessary to import it from Holland and from Hanover? But I will do the country the justice to say, that was not the case; and even if it was, it mistook the cargo. The wisdom of every country, when properly exerted, is sufficient for all its purposes; *and there could exist no more real occasion in England to have sent for a Dutch Stadtholder, or a German Elector, than* there was in America to have done a similar thing. If a country does not understand its own affairs, how is a foreigner to understand them, who knows neither its laws, its manners, nor its language? If there existed a man so transcendently wise above all others, that his wisdom was necessary to instruct a nation, some reason might be offered for monarchy; but when we cast our eyes about a country, and observe how every part understands its own affairs; and when we look around the world, and see that of all men in it, the race of kings are the most insignificant in capacity, our reason cannot fail to ask us—What are those men kept for?"*

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These are the notions which, under the idea of whig principles, several persons, and among them persons of no mean mark, have associated themselves to propagate. I will not attempt in the smallest degree to refute them. This will probably be done (if such writings shall be thought to deserve any other than the refutation of criminal justice) by others, who may think with Mr. Burke. He has performed his part.

I do not wish to enter very much at large into the discus-

* Vindication of the Rights of Man, recommended by the several societies.

sions which diverge and ramify in all ways from this productive subject. But there is one topic upon which I hope I shall be excused in going a little beyond my design. The factions, now so busy amongst us, in order to divest men of all love for their country, and to remove from their minds all duty with regard to the state, endeavor to propagate an opinion, that the *people*, in forming their commonwealth, have by no means parted with their power over it. This is an impregnable citadel, to which these gentlemen retreat whenever they are pushed by the battery of laws, and usages, and positive conventions. Indeed it is such and of so great force, that all they have done in defending their outworks is so much time and labor thrown away. Discuss any of their schemes—their answer is—It is the act of the *people*, and that is sufficient. Are we to deny to a *majority* of the people the right of altering even the whole frame of their society, if such should be their pleasure? They may change it, say they, from a monarchy to a republic to-day, and to-morrow back again from a republic to a monarchy; and so backward and forward as often as they like. They are masters of the commonwealth; because in substance they are themselves the commonwealth. The French revolution, say they, was the act of the majority of the people; and if the majority of any other people, the people of England for instance, wish to make the same change, they have the same right.

Just the same undoubtedly. That is, none at all. Neither the few nor the many have a right to act merely by their will, in any matter connected with duty, trust, engagement, or obligation. The constitution of a country being once settled upon some compact, tacit or expressed, there is no power existing of force to alter it, without the breach of the covenant, or the consent of all the parties. Such is the nature of a contract. And the votes of a majority of the people, whatever their infamous flatterers may teach in order to corrupt their minds, cannot alter the moral any more than they can alter the physical essence of things. The people are not to be taught to think lightly of their engagements to their gov-

ernors; else they teach governors to think lightly of their engagements towards them. In that kind of game in the end the people are sure to be losers. To flatter them into a contempt of faith, truth, and justice, is to ruin them; for in these virtues consists their whole safety. To flatter any man, or any part of mankind, in any description, by asserting, that in engagements he or they are free whilst any other human creature is bound, is ultimately to vest the rule of morality in the pleasure of those who ought to be rigidly submitted to it; to subject the sovereign reason of the world to the caprices of weak and giddy men.

But, as no one of us men can dispense with public or private faith, or with any other tie of moral obligation, so neither can any number of us. The number engaged in crimes, instead of turning them into laudable acts, only augments the quantity and intensity of the guilt. I am well aware, that men love to hear of their power, but have an extreme disrelish to be told of their duty. This is of course; because every duty is a limitation of some power. Indeed arbitrary power is so much to the depraved taste of the vulgar, of the vulgar of every description, that almost all the dissensions which lacerate the commonwealth, are not concerning the manner in which it is to be exercised, but concerning the hands in which it is to be placed. Somewhere they are resolved to have it. Whether they desire it to be vested in the many or the few, depends with most men upon the chance which they imagine they themselves may have of partaking in the exercise of that arbitrary sway, in the one mode or in the other.

It is not necessary to teach men to thirst after power. But it is very expedient that, by moral instruction, they should be taught, and by their civil constitutions they should be compelled, to put many restrictions upon the immoderate exercise of it, and the inordinate desire. The best method of obtaining these two great points forms the important, but at the same time the difficult problem to the true statesman. He thinks of the place in which political power is to be lodged, with no other attention, than as it may render the more or the less

practicable, its salutary restraint, and its prudent direction. For this reason no legislator, at any period of the world, has willingly placed the seat of active power in the hands of the multitude: because there it admits of no control, no regulation, no steady direction whatsoever. The people are the natural control on authority; but to exercise and to control together is contradictory and impossible.

As the exorbitant exercise of power cannot, under popular sway, be effectually restrained, the other great object of political arrangement, the means of abating an excessive desire of it, is in such a state still worse provided for. The democratic commonwealth is the foodful nurse of ambition. Under the other forms it meets with many restraints. Whenever, in states which have had a democratic basis, the legislators have endeavored to put restraints upon ambition, their methods were as violent, as in the end they were ineffectual; as violent indeed as any the most jealous despotism could invent. The ostracism could not very long save itself, and much less the state which it was meant to guard, from the attempts of ambition, one of the natural inbred incurable distempers of a powerful democracy.

But to return from this short digression, which however is not wholly foreign to the question of the effect of the will of the majority upon the form or the existence of their society. I cannot too often recommend it to the serious consideration of all men, who think civil society to be within the province of moral jurisdiction, that if we owe it to any duty, it is not subject to our will. Duties are not voluntary. Duty and will are even contradictory terms. Now though civil society might be at first a voluntary act (which in many cases it undoubtedly was) its continuance is under a permanent standing covenant, co-existing with the society; and it attaches upon every individual of that society, without any formal act of his own. This is warranted by the general practice, arising out of the general sense of mankind. Men without their choice derive benefits from that association; without their choice they are subjected to duties in conse-

quence of these benefits; and without their choice they enter into a virtual obligation as binding as any that is actual. Look through the whole of life and the whole system of duties. Much the strongest moral obligations are such as were never the results of our option. I allow, that if no supreme ruler exists, wise to form, and potent to enforce, the moral law, there is no sanction to any contract, virtual or even actual, against the will of prevalent power. On that hypothesis, let any set of men be strong enough to set their duties at defiance, and they cease to be duties any longer. We have but this one appeal against irresistible power—

> Si genus humanum et mortalia temnitis arma,
> At sperate Deos memores fandi atque nefandi.

Taking it for granted that I do not write to the disciples of the Parisian philosophy, I may assume, that the awful author of our being is the author of our place in the order of existence; and that having disposed and marshaled us by a divine tactic, not according to our will, but according to his, he has in and by that disposition, virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the place assigned us. We have obligations to mankind at large, which are not in consequence of any special voluntary pact. They arise from the relation of man to man, and the relation of man to God, which relations are not matters of choice. On the contrary, the force of all the pacts which we enter into with any particular person or number of persons amongst mankind, depends upon those prior obligations. In some cases the subordinate relations are voluntary, in others they are necessary—but the duties are all compulsive. When we marry, the choice is voluntary, but the duties are not matter of choice. They are dictated by the nature of the situation. Dark and inscrutable are the ways by which we come into the world. The instincts which give rise to this mysterious process of nature are not of our making. But out of physical causes, unknown to us, perhaps unknowable, arise moral duties, which, as we are able perfectly to comprehend, we are bound indispensably to per-

form. Parents may not be consenting to their moral relation; but consenting or not, they are bound to a long train of burthensome duties towards those with whom they have never made a convention of any sort. Children are not consenting to their relation, but their relation, without their actual consent, binds them to its duties; or rather it implies their consent, because the presumed consent of every rational creature is in unison with the predisposed order of things. Men come in that manner into a community with the social state of their parents, endowed with all the benefits, loaded with all the duties of their situation. If the social ties and ligaments, spun out of those physical relations which are the elements of the commonwealth, in most cases begin, and always continue, independently of our will, so without any stipulation on our own part, are we bound by that relation called our country, which comprehends (as it has been well said) 'all the charities of all.'* Nor are we left without powerful instincts to make this duty as dear and grateful to us, as it is awful and coercive. Our country is not a thing of mere physical locality. It consists, in a great measure, in the ancient order into which we are born. We may have the same geographical situation, but another country; as we may have the same country in another soil. The place that determines our duty to our country is a social, civil relation.

These are the opinions of the author whose cause I defend. I lay them down not to enforce them upon others by disputation, but as an account of his proceedings. On them he acts; and from them he is convinced that neither he, nor any man, or number of men, have a right (except what necessity, which is out of and above all rule, rather imposes than bestows,) to free themselves from that primary engagement into which every man born into a community as much contracts by his being born into it, as he contracts an obligation to certain parents by his having been derived from their bodies. The

* Omnes omnium charitates patria una complectitur. Cic.

place of every man determines his duty. If you ask, *Quem te Deus esse jussit?* You will be answered when you resolve this other question, *Humana qua parte locatus es in re?* *

I admit, indeed, that in morals, as in all things else, difficulties will sometimes occur. Duties will sometimes cross one another. Then questions will arise, which of them is to be placed in subordination; which of them may be entirely superseded? These doubts give rise to that part of moral science called *casuistry;* which, though necessary to be well studied by those who would become expert in that learning, who aim at becoming what, I think, Cicero somewhere calls, *artifices officiorum;* it requires a very solid and discriminating judgment, great modesty and caution, and much sobriety of mind in the handling; else there is a danger that it may totally subvert those offices which it is its oject only to methodize and reconcile. Duties, at their extreme bounds, are drawn very fine, so as to become almost evanescent. In that state, some shade of doubt will always rest on these questions, when they are pursued with great subtilty. But the very habit of stating these extreme cases is not very laudable or safe: because, in general, it is not right to turn our duties into doubts. They are imposed to govern our conduct, not to exercise our ingenuity; and therefore, our opinions about them ought not to be in a state of fluctuation, but steady, sure, and resolved.

Amongst these nice, and therefore dangerous, points of casuistry may be reckoned the question so much agitated in

* A few lines in Persius contain a good summary of all the objects of moral investigation, and hint the result of our inquiry: There human will has no place.

> Quid *sumus?* et quidnam *victuri gignimur?* ordo
> Quis *datus?* et *metæ* quis mollis flexus et unde?
> Quis modus argento? Quid *fas optare?* Quid asper
> Utile nummus habet? *Patriæ charisque propinquis*
> Quantum elargiri *debet?*—Quem te Deus esse
> *Jussit?*—et humana qua parte *locatus es* in re?

the present hour—Whether, after the people have discharged themselves of their original power by an habitual delegation, no occasion can possibly occur which may justify the resumption of it? This question, in this latitude, is very hard to affirm or deny: but I am satisfied that no occasion can justify such a resumption, which would not equally authorize a dispensation with any other moral duty, perhaps with all of them together. However, if in general it be not easy to determine concerning the lawfulness of such devious proceedings, which must be ever on the edge of crimes, it is far from difficult to foresee the perilous consequences of the resuscitation of such a power in the people. The practical consequences of any political tenet go a great way in deciding upon its value. Political problems do not primarily concern truth or falsehood. They relate to good or evil. What in the result is likely to produce evil, is politically false: that which is productive of good, politically true.

Believing it therefore a question at least arduous in the theory, and in the practice very critical, it would become us to ascertain, as well as we can, what form it is that our incantations are about to call up from darkness and the sleep of ages. When the supreme authority of the people is in question, before we attempt to extend or to confine it, we ought to fix in our minds, with some degree of distinctness, an idea of what it is we mean, when we say the PEOPLE.

In a state of *rude* nature there is no such thing as a people. A number of men in themselves have no collective capacity. The idea of a people is the idea of a corporation. It is wholly artificial; and made like all other legal fictions by common agreement. What the particular nature of that agreement was, is collected from the form into which the particular society has been cast. Any other is not *their* covenant. When men, therefore, break up the original compact or agreement which gives its corporate form and capacity to a state, they are no longer a people; they have no longer a corporate existence; they have no longer a legal co-active force to bind within, nor a claim to be recognised abroad.

They are a number of vague loose individuals, and nothing more. With them all is to begin again. Alas! they little know how many a weary step is to be taken before they can form themselves into a mass, which has a true politic personality.

We hear much from men, who have not acquired their hardiness of assertion from the profundity of their thinking, about the omnipotence of a *majority*, in such a dissolution of an ancient society as hath taken place in France. But amongst men so disbanded, there can be no such thing as majority or minority; or power in any one person to bind another. The power of acting by a majority, which the gentlemen theorists seem to assume so readily, after they have violated the contract out of which it has arisen, (if at all it existed) must be grounded on two assumptions; first, that of an incorporation produced by unanimity; and secondly, an unanimous agreement, that the act of a mere majority (say of one) shall pass with them and with others as the act of the whole.

We are so little affected by things which are habitual, that we consider this idea of the decision of a *majority* as if it were a law of our original nature: But such constructive whole, residing in a part only, is one of the most violent fictions of positive law, that ever has been or can be made on the principles of artificial incorporation. Out of civil society nature knows nothing of it; nor are men, even when arranged according to civil order, otherwise than by very long training, brought at all to submit to it. The mind is brought far more easily to acquiesce in the proceedings of one man, or a few, who act under a general procuration for the state, than in the vote of a victorious majority in councils in which every man has his share in the deliberation. For there the beaten party are exasperated and soured by the previous contention, and mortified by the conclusive defeat. This mode of decision, where wills may be so nearly equal, where, according to circumstances, the smaller number may be the stronger force, and where apparent reason may be all upon

one side, and on the other little else than impetuous appetite; all this must be the result of a very particular and special convention, confirmed afterwards by long habits of obedience, by a sort of discipline in society, and by a strong hand, vested with stationary permanent power, to enforce this sort of constructive general will. What organ it is that shall declare the corporate mind is so much a matter of positive arrangement, that several states, for the validity of several of their acts, have required a proportion of voices much greater than that of a mere majority. These proportions are so entirely governed by convention, that in some cases the minority decides. The laws in many countries to *condemn* require more than a mere majority; less than an equal number to *acquit*. In our judicial trials we require unanimity either to condemn or to absolve. In some incorporations one man speaks for the whole; in others, a few. Until the other day, in the constitution of Poland, unanimity was required to give validity to any act of their great national council or diet. This approaches much more nearly to rude nature than the institutions of any other country. Such, indeed, every commonwealth must be, without a positive law to recognise in a certain number the will of the entire body.

If men dissolve their ancient incorporation, in order to regenerate their community, in that state of things each man has a right, if he pleases, to remain an individual. Any number of individuals, who can agree upon it, have an undoubted right to form themselves into a state apart and wholly independent. If any of these is forced into the fellowship of another, this is conquest and not compact. On every principle, which supposes society to be in virtue of a free covenant, this compulsive incorporation must be null and void.

As a people can have no right to a corporate capacity without universal consent, so neither have they a right to hold exclusively any lands in the name and title of a corporation. On the scheme of the present rulers in our neighboring country, regenerated as they are, they have no more

right to the territory called France than I have. I have a right to pitch my tent in any unoccupied place I can find for it; and I may apply to my own maintenance any part of their unoccupied soil. I may purchase the house or vineyard of any individual proprietor who refuses his consent (and most proprietors have, as far as they dared, refused it,) to the new incorporation. I stand in his independent place. Who are these insolent men calling themselves the French nation, that would monopolize this fair domain of nature? Is it because they speak a certain jargon? Is it their mode of chattering, to me unintelligible, that forms their title to my land? Who are they who claim by prescription and descent from certain gangs of banditti called Franks, and Burgundians, and Visigoths, of whom I may have never heard, and ninety-nine out of an hundred of themselves certainly never have heard; whilst at the very time they tell me, that prescription and long possession form no title to property? Who are they that presume to assert that the land which I purchased of the individual, a natural person, and not a fiction of state, belongs to them, who in the very capacity in which they make their claim can exist only as an imaginary being, and in virtue of the very prescription which they reject and disown? This mode of arguing might be pushed into all the detail, so as to leave no sort of doubt, that on their principles, and on the sort of footing on which they have thought proper to place themselves, the crowd of men, on the one side of the channel, who have the impudence to call themselves a people, can never be the lawful exclusive possessors of the soil. By what they call reasoning without prejudice, they leave not one stone upon another in the fabric of human society. They subvert all the authority which they hold, as well as all that which they have destroyed.

As in the abstract, it is perfectly clear, that, out of a state of civil society, majority and minority are relations which can have no existence; and that in civil society, its own specific conventions in each corporation, determine what it is that constitutes the people, so as to make their act the signi-

fication of the general will; to come to particulars, it is equally clear, that neither in France nor in England has the original, or any subsequent compact of the state, expressed or implied, constituted *a majority of men, told by the head,* to be the acting people of their several communities. And I see as little of policy or utility, as there is of right, in laying down a principle that a majority of men told by the head are to be considered as the people, and that as such their will is to be law. What policy can there be found in arrangements made in defiance of every political principle? To enable men to act with the weight and character of a people, and to answer the ends for which they are incorporated into that capacity, we must suppose them (by means immediate or consequential) to be in that state of habitual social discipline, in which the wiser, the more expert, and the more opulent, conduct, and by conducting enlighten and protect the weaker, the less knowing, and the less provided with the goods of fortune. When the multitude are not under this discipline, they can scarcely be said to be in civil society. Give once a certain constitution of things, which produces a variety of conditions and circumstances in a state, and there is in nature and reason a principle which, for their own benefit, postpones, not the interest but the judgment, of those who are *numero plures,* to those who are *virtute et honore majores.* Numbers in a state (supposing, which is not the case in France, that a state does exist,) are always of consideration—but they are not the whole consideration. It is in things more serious than a play, that it may be truly said *satis est equitem mihi plaudere.*

A true natural aristocracy is not a separate interest in the state, or separable from it. It is an essential integrant part of any large body rightly constituted. It is formed out of a class of legitimate presumptions, which, taken as generalities, must be admitted for actual truths. To be bred in a place of estimation; To see nothing low and sordid from one's infancy; To be taught to respect one's self; To be habituated to the censorial inspection of the public eye; To look early

to public opinion; To stand upon such elevated ground as to be enabled to take a large view of the wide-spread and infinitely diversified combinations of men and affairs in a large society; To have leisure to read, to reflect, to converse; To be enabled to draw the court and attention of the wise and learned wherever they are to be found;—To be habituated in armies, to command and to obey; To be taught to despise danger in the pursuit of honor and duty; To be formed to the greatest degree of vigilance, foresight, and circumspection, in a state of things in which no fault is committed with impunity, and the slightest mistakes draw on the most ruinous consequences—To be led to a guarded and regulated conduct, from a sense that you are considered as an instructer of your fellow-citizens in their highest concerns, and that you act as a reconciler between God and man—To be employed as an administrator of law and justice, and to be thereby amongst the first benefactors to mankind—To be a professor of high science, or of liberal and ingenuous art—to be amongst rich traders, who from their success are presumed to have sharp and vigorous understandings, and to possess the virtues of diligence, order, constancy, and regularity, and to have cultivated an habitual regard to commutative justice—These are the circumstances of men, that form what I should call a *natural* aristocracy, without which there is no nation.

The state of civil society, which necessarily generates this aristocracy, is a state of nature; and much more truly so than a savage and incoherent mode of life. For man is by nature reasonable; and he is never perfectly in his natural state, but when he is placed where reason may be best cultivated, and most predominates. Art is man's nature. We are as much, at least, in a state of nature in formed manhood, as in immature and helpless infancy. Men qualified in the manner I have just described, form in nature, as she operates in the common modification of society, the leading, guiding, and governing part. It is the soul to the body, without which the man does not exist. To give therefore no more importance,

in the social order, to such descriptions of men, than that of so many units, is a horrible usurpation.

When great multitudes act together, under that discipline of nature, I recognise the PEOPLE. I acknowledge something that perhaps equals, and ought always to guide, the sovereignty of convention. In all things the voice of this grand chorus of national harmony ought to have a mighty and decisive influence. But when you disturb this harmony; when you break up this beautiful order, this array of truth and nature, as well as of habit and prejudice; when you separate the common sort of men from their proper chieftains so as to form them into an adverse army, I no longer know that venerable object called the people in such a disbanded race of deserters and vagabonds. For awhile they may be terrible indeed; but in such a manner as wild beasts are terrible. The mind owes to them no sort of submission. They are, as they have always been reputed, rebels. They may lawfully be fought with, and brought under, whenever an advantage offers. Those who attempt by outrage and violence to deprive men of any advantage which they hold under the laws, and to destroy the natural order of life, proclaim war against them.

We have read in history of that furious insurrection of the common people in France called the *Jacquerie;* for this is not the first time that the people have been enlightened into treason, murder, and rapine. Its object was to extirpate the gentry. The *Captal de Buche*, a famous soldier of those days, dishonored the name of a gentleman and of a man by taking, for their cruelties, a cruel vengeance on these deluded wretches: it was, however, his right and his duty to make war upon them, and afterwards, in moderation, to bring them to punishment for their rebellion; though in the sense of the French revolution, and of some of our clubs, they were the *people;* and were truly so, if you will call by that appellation *any majority of men told by the head.*

At a time not very remote from the same period (for these humors never have affected one of the nations without some

influence on the other) happened several risings of the lower commons in England. These insurgents were certainly the majority of the inhabitants of the counties in which they resided; and Cade, Ket, and Straw, at the head of their national guards, and fomented by certain traitors of high rank, did no more than exert, according to the doctrines of ours and the Parisian societies, the sovereign power inherent in the majority.

We call the time of those events a dark age. Indeed we are too indulgent to our own proficiency. The Abbé John Ball understood the rights of man as well as the Abbé Gregoire. That reverend patriarch of sedition, and prototype of our modern preachers, was of opinion with the national assembly, that all the evils which have fallen upon men had been caused by an ignorance of their "having been born and continued equal as to their rights." Had the populace been able to repeat that profound maxim all would have gone perfectly well with them. No tyranny, no vexation, no oppression, no care, no sorrow, could have existed in the world. This would have cured them like a charm for the tooth-ach. But the lowest wretches, in their most ignorant state, were able at all times to talk such stuff; and yet at all times have they suffered many evils and many oppressions, both before and since the republication by the national assembly of this spell of healing potency and virtue. The enlightened Dr. Ball, when he wished to rekindle the lights and fires of his audience on this point, chose for the text the following couplet:

> When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?

Of this sapient maxim, however, I do not give him for the inventor. It seems to have been handed down by tradition, and had certainly become proverbial; but whether then composed, or only applied, thus much must be admitted, that in learning, sense, energy, and comprehensiveness, it is fully equal to all the modern dissertations on the equality of man-

kind; and it has one advantage over them, that it is in rhyme.*

There is no doubt, but that this great teacher of the rights of man decorated his discourse on this valuable text, with

* It is no small loss to the world, that the whole of this enlightened and philosophic sermon, preached to *two hundred thousand* national guards assembled at Blackheath (a number probably equal to the sublime and majestic *Federation* of the 14th of July, 1790, in the *Champs de Mars*) is not preserved. A short abstract is, however, to be found in Walsingham. I have added it here for the edification of the modern whigs, who may possibly except this precious little fragment from their general contempt of ancient learning.

Ut sua doctrina plures inficeret ad le Blackheth (ubi ducenta millia hominum communium fuere simul congregata) hujuscemodi sermonem est exorsus.

Whan Adam dalfe, and Evé span,
Who was than a gentleman?

Continuansque sermonem inceptum nitebatur per verba proverbii quod pro themate sumpserat, introducere et probare, *ab initio omnes pares creatos a natura*, servitutem per injustam oppressionem nequam hominum introductam contra Dei voluntatem, quia si Deo placuisset servos creasse, utique in principio mundi constituisset, quis servus, quisve dominus futurus fuisset. Considerarent igitur jam tempus a Deo datum eis, in quo (deposito servitutis jugo diutius) possent si vellent, libertate diu concupita gaudere. Quapropter monuit ut essent viri cordati, et amore boni patris familias excolentis agrum suum et extirpantis ac resecantis noxia gramina quæ fruges solent opprimere, et ipsi in præsenti facere festinarent; primo *majores regni dominos occidendo; deinde juridicos, justiciarios et juratores patriæ perimendo;* postremo quoscunque scirent *in posterum communitati nocivos* tollerent de terra sua: sic demum et *pacem* sibimet *parerent* et *securitatem* in futurum, *si sublatis majoribus esset inter eos æqua libertas, eadem nobilitas, par dignitas, similisque potestas.*

Here is displayed at once the whole of the grand arcanum pretended to be found out by the national assembly, for securing future happiness, peace, and tranquillity. There seems however to be some doubt whether this venerable protomartyr of philosophy was inclined to carry his own declaration of the rights of men more rigidly into practice than the national assembly themselves. He was, like them, only preaching licentiousness to the populace to obtain power for himself, if we may believe what is subjoined by the historian.

Cumque hæc et *plura alia deliramenta* [think of this old fool's calling all the wise maxims of the French academy *deliramenta*] prædicasset, commune vulgus cum tanto favore prosequitur, ut *acclamarent eum archiepiscopum futurum, et regni cancellarium.* Whether he would have taken these situations under these names, or would have changed the whole nomenclature of the state and church, to be understood in the sense of the revolution, is not so certain. It is probable that he would have changed the names and kept the substance of power.

lemmas, theorems, scholia, corollaries, and all the apparatus of science, which was furnished in as great plenty and perfection out of the dogmatic, and polemic magazines, the old horse-armory of the schoolmen, among whom the Rev. Dr.

We find too, that they had in those days their *society for constitutional information*, of which the reverend John Ball was a conspicuous member, sometimes under his own name, sometimes under the feigned name of John Schep. Besides him it consisted (as Knyghton tells us) of persons who went by the real or fictitious names of Jack Mylner, Tom Baker, Jack Straw, Jack Trewman, Jack Carter, and probably of many more. Some of the choicest flowers of the publications, charitably written and circulated by them gratis, are upon record in Walsingham and Knyghton; and I am inclined to prefer the pithy and sententious brevity of these *bulletins* of ancient rebellion, before the loose and confused prolixity of the modern advertisements of constitutional information. They contain more good morality, and less bad politics; they had much more foundation in real oppression; and they have the recommendation of being much better adapted to the capacities of those for whose instruction they were intended. Whatever laudable pains the teachers of the present day appear to take, I cannot compliment them, so far as to allow, that they have succeeded in writing down to the level of their pupils, *the members of the sovereign*, with half the ability of Jack Carter and the reverend John Ball. That my readers may judge for themselves, I shall give them one or two specimens.

The first is an address from the reverend John Ball, under his *nom de guerre* of John Schep. I know not against what particular "guyle in borough" the writer means to caution the people; it may have been only a general cry against "*rotten boroughs*," which it was thought convenient then as now to make the first pretext, and place at the head of the list of grievances.

JOHN SCHEP.

John Schep sometime Seint Mary Priest of Yorke, and now of Colchester, greeteth well John Namelesse, & John the Miller, & John Carter, and *biddeth them that they beware of guyle in borough*, and stand together in God's name: and biddeth Piers Ploweman goe to his werk, and chastise well *Hob the robber*, [probably the king] and take with you John Trewman, and all his fellows and no moe.

John the Miiler hath yground smal, small, small:
The King's Sonne of Heven shal pay for all.
Beware or ye be woe,
Know your frende fro your foe,
Have enough and say hoe:
And do wel and better, and flee sinne.
And seeke peace and holde you therein;

& so biddeth John Trewman, & all his fellowes.

Ball was bred, as they can be supplied from the new arsenal at Hackney. It was, no doubt, disposed with all the adjutancy of definition and division, in which (I speak it with submission) the old marshals were as able as the modern martinets. Neither can we deny, that the philosophic auditory, when they had once obtained this knowledge, could never return to their former ignorance; or after so instructive

The reader has perceived, from the last lines of this curious state paper, how well the national assembly has copied its union of the profession of universal peace, with the practice of murder and confusion, and the blast of the trumpet of sedition in all nations. He will, in the following constitutional paper, observe how well, in their enigmatical style, like the assembly and their abettors, the old philosophers, proscribe all hereditary distinction, and bestow it only on virtue and wisdom, according to their estimation of both. Yet these people are supposed never to have heard of "the rights of man!"

JACK MYLNER.

Jakke Mylner asketh help to turne his mylne aright.

He hath grounden smal, smal,
The King's Sone of Heven he shall pay for alle.

Loke thy mylne go a ryyt with the four sayles, and the post stand in steadfastnesse.

With ryyt & with myyt,
With skill & with wylle,
Lat myyt help ryyt,
And skyl go before wille,
And ryyt before myght.
Than goth our mylne stryght.
And if myght go before ryght,
And wylle before skylle;
Than is our mylne mys-a-dyght.

JACK CARTER understood perfectly the doctrine of looking to the *end*, with an indifference to the *means*, and the probability of much good arising from great evil.

Jakke Carter prayes yowe alle that ye make a gode *ende* of that ye have begunnen, & doth wele and ay bettur & bettur, for at the even men heryth the day. *For if the ende be wele than is alle wele.* Lat Peres the plow man my brother dwelle at home and dyght us corne, & I will go with yowe & helpe, that I may, to dyghte your mete and youre drynke, that ye none fayle Lokke that Hobbe robbyoure be wele chastysed for lesyng of your grace: for ye have gret nede to take God with yowe in all your dedes. For now is tyme to be war.

a lecture be in the same state of mind as if they had never heard it.* But these poor people, who were not to be envied for their knowledge, but pitied for their delusion, were not reasoned (that was impossible) but beaten out of their lights. With their teacher they were delivered over to the lawyers; who wrote in their blood the statutes of the land, as harshly, and in the same sort of ink, as they and their teachers had written the rights of man.

Our doctors of the day are not so fond of quoting the opinions of this ancient sage as they are of imitating his conduct; First, because it might appear, that they are not as great inventors as they would be thought; and next, because unfortunately for his fame, he was not successful. It is a remark, liable to as few exceptions as any generality can be, that they who applaud prosperous folly, and adore triumphant guilt, have never been known to succor or even to pity human weakness or offence when they become subject to human vicissitude, and meet with punishment instead of obtaining power. Abating for their want of sensibility to the sufferings of their associates, they are not so much in the wrong; for madness and wickedness are things foul and deformed in themselves; and stand in need of all the coverings and trappings of fortune to recommend them to the multitude. Nothing can be more loathsome in their naked nature.

Aberrations like these, whether ancient or modern, unsuccessful or prosperous, are things of passage. They furnish no argument for supposing *a multitude told by the head to be the people.* Such a multitude can have no sort of title to alter the seat of power in the society, in which it ever ought to be the obedient, and not the ruling or presiding part. What power may belong to the whole mass, in which mass, the natural *aristocracy*, or what by convention is appointed to represent and strengthen it, acts in its proper place, with its proper weight, and without being subjected to violence, is a deeper

* See the wise remark on this subject, in the Defence of Rights of Man, circulated by the societies.

question. But in that case, and with that concurrence, I should have much doubt whether any rash or desperate changes in the state, such as we have seen in France, could ever be effected.

I have said, that in all political questions the consequences of any assumed rights are of great moment in deciding upon their validity. In this point of view let us a little scrutinize the effects of a right in the mere majority of the inhabitants of any country of superseding and altering their government *at pleasure.*

The sum total of every people is composed of its units. Every individual must have a right to originate what afterwards is to become the act of the majority. Whatever he may lawfully originate, he may lawfully endeavor to accomplish. He has a right therefore in his own particular to break the ties and engagements which bind him to the country in which he lives; and he has a right to make as many converts to his opinions, and to obtain as many associates in his designs, as he can procure: For how can you know the dispositions of the majority to destroy their government, but by tampering with some part of the body? You must begin by a secret conspiracy, that you may end with a national confederation. The mere pleasure of the beginner must be the sole guide; since the mere pleasure of others must be the sole ultimate sanction, as well as the sole actuating principle in every part of the progress. Thus, arbitrary will (the last corruption of ruling power) step by step, poisons the heart of every citizen. If the undertaker fails, he has the misfortune of a rebel, but not the guilt. By such doctrines, all love to our country, all pious veneration and attachment to its laws and customs, are obliterated from our minds; and nothing can result from this opinion, when grown into a principle, and animated by discontent, ambition, or enthusiasm, but a series of conspiracies and seditions, sometimes ruinous to their authors, always noxious to the state. No sense of duty can prevent any man from being a leader or a follower in such enterprises. Nothing restrains the tempter; nothing guards the tempted. Nor is the

new state, fabricated by such arts, safer than the old. What can prevent the mere will of any person, who hopes to unite the wills of others to his own, from an attempt wholly to overturn it? It wants nothing but a disposition to trouble the established order, to give a title to the enterprise.

When you combine this principle of the right to change a fixed and tolerable constitution of things at pleasure, with the theory and practice of the French assembly, the political, civil, and moral irregularity, are if possible aggravated. The assembly have found another road, and a far more commodious, to the destruction of an old government, and the legitimate formation of a new one, than through the previous will of the majority of what they call the people. Get, say they, the possession of power by any means you can into your hands; and then a subsequent consent (what they call an *address of adhesion*) makes your authority as much the act of the people as if they had conferred upon you originally that kind and degree of power, which, without their permission, you had seized upon. This is to give a direct sanction to fraud, hypocrisy, perjury, and the breach of the most sacred trusts that can exist between man and man. What can sound with such horrid discordance in the moral ear, as this position, That a delegate with limited powers may break his sworn engagements to his constituent, assume an authority, never committed to him, to alter all things at his pleasure; and then, if he can persuade a large number of men to flatter him in the power he has usurped, that he is absolved in his own conscience, and ought to stand acquitted in the eyes of mankind? On this scheme the maker of the experiment must begin with a determined perjury. That point is certain. He must take his chance for the expiatory addresses. This is to make the success of villany the standard of innocence.

Without drawing on, therefore, very shocking consequences, neither by previous consent, nor by subsequent ratification, of a *mere reckoned majority*, can any set of men attempt to dissolve the state at their pleasure. To apply this to our

present subject. When the several orders, in their several bailliages, had met in the year 1789, such of them, I mean, as had met peaceably and constitutionally, to choose and to instruct their representatives, so organized, and so acting, (because they were organized and were acting according to the conventions which made them a people) they were the *people* of France. They had a legal and a natural capacity to be considered as that people. But observe, whilst they were in this state, that is, whilst they were a people, in no one of their instructions did they charge or even hint at any of those things, which have drawn upon the usurping assembly, and their adherents, the detestation of the rational and thinking part of mankind. I will venture to affirm, without the least apprehension of being contradicted by any person who knows the then state of France, that if any one of the changes were proposed, which form the fundamental parts of their revolution, and compose its most distinguishing acts, it would not have had one vote in twenty thousand in any order. Their instructions purported the direct contrary to all those famous proceedings, which are defended as the acts of the people. Had such proceedings been expected, the great probability is, that the people would then have risen, as to a man, to prevent them. The whole organization of the assembly was altered, the whole frame of the kingdom was changed, before these things could be done. It is long to tell, by what evil arts of the conspirators, and by what extreme weakness and want of steadiness in the lawful government, this equal usurpation on the rights of the prince and people, having first cheated, and then offered violence to both, has been able to triumph, and to employ with success the forged signature of an imprisoned sovereign, and the spurious voice of dictated addresses, to a subsequent ratification of things that had never received any previous sanction, general or particular, expressed or implied, from the nation (in whatever sense that word is taken) or from any part of it.

After the weighty and respectable part of the people had

been murdered, or driven by the menaces of murder from their houses, or were dispersed in exile into every country in Europe; after the soldiery had been debauched from their officers; after property had lost its weight and consideration, along with its security; after voluntary clubs and associations of factious and unprincipled men were substituted in the place of all the legal corporations of the kingdom arbitrarily dissolved; after freedom had been banished from those popular meetings* whose sole recommendation is freedom—After it had come to that pass, that no dissent dared to appear in any of them, but at the certain price of life; after even dissent had been anticipated, and assassination became as quick as suspicion; such pretended ratification by addresses could be no act of what any lover of the people would choose to call by their name. It is that voice which every successful usurpation, as well as this before us, may easily procure, even without making (as these tyrants have made) donatives from the spoil of one part of the citizens to corrupt the other.

The pretended *rights of man*, which have made this havoc, cannot be the rights of the people. For to be a people, and to have these rights, are things incompatible. The one supposes the presence, the other the absence of a state of civil society. The very foundation of the French commonwealth is false and self-destructive; nor can its principles be adopted in any country, without the certainty of bringing it to the very same condition in which France is found. Attempts are made to introduce them into every nation in Europe. This nation, as possessing the greatest influence, they wish most to corrupt, as by that means they are assured the contagion must become general. I hope, therefore, I shall be excused; if I endeavor to shew, as shortly as the matter will admit, the danger of giving to them, either avowedly or tacitly, the smallest countenance.

There are times and circumstances, in which not to speak out is at least to connive. Many think it enough for them,

* The primary assemblies.

that the principles propagated by these clubs and societies, enemies to their country and its constitution, are not owned by the *modern whigs in parliament*, who are so warm in condemnation of Mr. Burke and his book, and of course of all the principles of the ancient constitutional whigs of this kingdom. Certainly they are not owned. But are they condemned with the same zeal as Mr. Burke and his book are condemned? Are they condemned at all? Are they rejected or discountenanced in any way whatsoever? Is any man who would fairly examine into the demeanor and principles of those societies, and that too very moderately, and in the way rather of admonition than of punishment, is such a man even decently treated? Is he not reproached, as if, in condemning such principles, he had belied the conduct of his whole life, suggesting that his life had been governed by principles similar to those which he now reprobates? The French system is in the mean time, by many active agents out of doors, rapturously praised; the British constitution is coldly tolerated. But these constitutions are different, both in the foundation and in the whole superstructure; and it is plain, that you cannot build up the one but on the ruins of the other. After all, if the French be a superior system of liberty, why should we not adopt it? To what end are our praises? Is excellence held out to us only that we should not copy after it? And what is there in the manners of the people, or in the climate of France, which renders that species of republic fitted for them, and unsuitable to us? A strong and marked difference between the two nations ought to be shewn, before we can admit a constant affected panegyric, a standing annual commemoration, to be without any tendency to an example.

But the leaders of party will not go the length of the doctrines taught by the seditious clubs. I am sure they do not mean to do so. God forbid! Perhaps even those who are directly carrying on the work of this pernicious foreign faction, do not all of them intend to produce all the mischiefs which must inevitably follow from their having any success

in their proceedings. As to leaders in parties, nothing is more common than to see them blindly led. The world is governed by go-betweens. These go-betweens influence the persons with whom they carry on the intercourse, by stating their own sense to each of them as the sense of the other; and thus they reciprocally master both sides. It is first buzzed about the ears of leaders, "that their friends without doors are very eager for some measure, or very warm about some opinion—that you must not be too rigid with them. They are useful persons, and zealous in the cause. They may be a little wrong; but the spirit of liberty must not be damped; and by the influence you obtain from some degree of concurrence with them at present, you may be enabled to set them right hereafter."

Thus the leaders are at first drawn to a connivance with sentiments and proceedings, often totally different from their serious and deliberate notions. But their acquiescence answers every purpose.

With no better than such powers, the go-betweens assume a new representative character. What at best was but an acquiescence, is magnified into an authority, and thence into a desire on the part of the leaders; and it is carried down as such to the subordinate members of parties. By this artifice they in their turn are led into measures which at first, perhaps, few of them wished at all, or at least did not desire vehemently or systematically.

There is in all parties, between the principal leaders in parliament, and the lowest followers out of doors, a middle sort of men; a sort of equestrian order, who, by the spirit of that middle situation, are the fittest for preventing things from running to excess. But indecision, though a vice of a totally different character, is the natural accomplice of violence. The irresolution and timidity of those who compose this middle order, often prevents the effect of their controlling situation. The fear of differing with the authority of leaders on the one hand, and of contradicting the desires of the multitude on the other, induces them to give a careless and passive assent to measures in which they never were consulted: and

thus things proceed, by a sort of activity of inertness, until whole bodies, leaders, middle men, and followers, are all hurried, with every appearance, and with many of the effects, of unanimity, into schemes of politics, in the substance of which no two of them were ever fully agreed, and the origin and authors of which, in this circular mode of communication, none of them find it possible to trace. In my experience I have seen much of this in affairs, which, though trifling in comparison to the present, were yet of some importance to parties; and I have known them suffer by it. The sober part give their sanction, at first through inattention and levity; at last they give it through necessity. A violent spirit is raised, which the presiding minds, after a time, find it impracticable to stop at their pleasure, to control, to regulate, or even to direct.

This shews, in my opinion, how very quick and awakened all men ought to be, who are looked up to by the public, and who deserve that confidence, to prevent a surprise on their opinions, when dogmas are spread, and projects pursued, by which the foundations of society may be affected. Before they listen even to moderate alterations in the government of their country, they ought to take care that principles are not propagated for that purpose, which are too big for their object. Doctrines limited in their present application, and wide in their general principles, are never meant to be confined to what they at first pretend. If I were to form a prognostic of the effect of the present machinations on the people, from their sense of any grievance they suffer under this constitution, my mind would be at ease. But there is a wide difference between the multitude, when they act against their government, from a sense of grievance, or from zeal for some opinions. When men are thoroughly possessed with that zeal, it is difficult to calculate its force. It is certain, that its power is by no means in exact proportion to its reasonableness. It must always have been discoverable by persons of reflection, but it is now obvious to the world, that a theory concerning government may become as much a cause of fanaticism as a *dogma* in religion. There is a boundary to

men's passions when they act from feeling; none when they are under the influence of imagination. Remove a grievance, and, when men act from feeling, you go a great way towards quieting a commotion. But the good or bad conduct of a government, the protection men have enjoyed, or the oppression they have suffered under it, are of no sort of moment, when a faction proceeding upon speculative grounds, is thoroughly heated against its form. When a man is, from system, furious against monarchy or episcopacy, the good conduct of the monarch or the bishop has no other effect than further to irritate the adversary. He is provoked at it as furnishing a plea for preserving the thing which he wishes to destroy. His mind will be heated as much by the sight of a sceptre, a mace, or a verge, as if he had been daily bruised and wounded by these symbols of authority. Mere spectacles, mere names, will become sufficient causes to stimulate the people to war and tumult.

Some gentlemen are not terrified by the facility with which government has been overturned in France. The people of France, they say, had nothing to lose in the destruction of a bad constitution; but, though not the best possible, we have still a good stake in ours, which will hinder us from desperate risks. Is this any security at all against those who seem to persuade themselves, and who labor to persuade others, that our constitution is an usurpation in its origin, unwise in its contrivance, mischievous in its effects, contrary to the rights of man, and in all its parts a perfect nuisance? What motive has any rational man, who thinks in that manner, to spill his blood, or even to risk a shilling of his fortune, or to waste a moment of his leisure to preserve it? If he has any duty relative to it, his duty is to destroy it. A constitution on sufferance is a constitution condemned. Sentence is already passed upon it. The execution is only delayed. On the principles of these gentlemen it neither has, nor ought to have, any security. So far as regards them, it is left naked, without friends, partisans, assertors, or protectors.

Let us examine into the value of this security upon the

principles of those who are more sober; of those who think, indeed, the French constitution better, or at least as good, as the British, without going to all the lengths of the warmer politicians in reprobating their own. Their security amounts in reality to nothing more than this;—that the difference between their republican system and the British limited monarchy is not worth a civil war. This opinion, I admit, will prevent people not very enterprising in their nature, from an active undertaking against the British constitution. But it is the poorest defensive principle that ever was infused into the mind of man against the attempts of those who will enterprise. It will tend totally to remove from their minds that very terror of a civil war which is held out as our sole security. They who think so well of the French constitution, certainly will not be the persons to carry on a war to prevent their obtaining a great benefit, or at worst a fair exchange. They will not go to battle in favor of a cause in which their defeat might be more advantageous to the public than their victory. They must at least tacitly abet those who endeavor to make converts to a sound opinion; they must discountenance those who would oppose its propagation. In proportion as by these means the enterprising party is strengthened, the dread of a struggle is lessened. See what an encouragement this is to the enemies of the constitution! A few assassinations, and a very great destruction of property, we know they consider as no real obstacles in the way of a grand political change. And they will hope, that here, if antimonarchical opinions gain ground, as they have done in France, they may, as in France, accomplish a revolution without a war.

They who think so well of the French constitution cannot be seriously alarmed by any progress made by its partisans. Provisions for security are not to be received from those who think that there is no danger. No! there is no plan of security to be listened to but from those who entertain the same fears with ourselves; from those who think that the thing to be secured is a great blessing; and the thing against which we would secure it a great mischief. Every person of a different opinion must be careless about security.

I believe the author of the Reflections, whether he fears the designs of that set of people with reason or not, cannot prevail on himself to despise them. He cannot despise them for their numbers, which, though small, compared with the sound part of the community, are not inconsiderable: he cannot look with contempt on their influence, their activity, or the kind of talents and tempers which they possess, exactly calculated for the work they have in hand, and the minds they chiefly apply to. Do we not see their most considerable and accredited ministers, and several of their party of weight and importance, active in spreading mischievous opinions, in giving sanction to seditious writings, in promoting seditious anniversaries? And what part of their description has disowned them or their proceedings? When men, circumstanced as these are, publicly declare such admiration of a foreign constitution, and such contempt of our own, it would be, in the author of the Reflections, thinking as he does of the French constitution, infamously to cheat the rest of the nation to their ruin, to say there is no danger.

In estimating danger, we are obliged to take into our calculation the character and disposition of the enemy into whose hands we may chance to fall. The genius of this faction is easily discerned by observing with what a very different eye they have viewed the late foreign revolutions. Two have passed before them. That of France and that of Poland. The state of Poland was such, that there could scarcely exist two opinions, but that a reformation of its constitution, even at some expense of blood, might be seen without much disapprobation. No confusion could be feared in such an enterprise; because the establishment to be reformed was itself a state of confusion. A king without authority; nobles without union or subordination; a people without arts, industry, commerce, or liberty; no order within, no defence without; no effective public force, but a foreign force, which entered a naked country at will, and disposed of every thing at pleasure. Here was a state of things which seemed to invite, and might perhaps justify bold enterprise and desperate

experiment. But in what manner was this chaos brought into order? The means were as striking to the imagination, as satisfactory to the reason, and soothing to the moral sentiments. In contemplating that change, humanity has every thing to rejoice and to glory in; nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to suffer. So far as it has gone, it probably is the most pure and defecated public good which ever has been conferred on mankind. We have seen anarchy and servitude at once removed; a throne strengthened for the protection of the people, without trenching on their liberties; all foreign cabal banished, by changing the crown from elective to hereditary; and what was a matter of pleasing wonder, we have seen a reigning king, from an heroic love to his country, exerting himself with all the toil, the dexterity, the management, the intrigue, in favor of a family of strangers, with which ambitious men labor for the aggrandizement of their own. Ten millions of men in a way of being freed gradually, and therefore safely to themselves and the state, not from civil or political chains, which, bad as they are, only fetter the mind, but from substantial personal bondage. Inhabitants of cities, before without privileges, placed in the consideration which belongs to that improved and connecting situation of social life. One of the most proud, numerous, and fierce bodies of nobility and gentry ever known in the world, arranged only in the foremost rank of free and generous citizens. Not one man incurred loss, or suffered degradation. All, from the king to the day-laborer, were improved in their condition. Every thing was kept in its place and order; but in that place and order every thing was bettered. To add to this happy wonder (this unheard-of conjunction of wisdom and fortune) not one drop of blood was spilled; no treachery; no outrage; no system of slander more cruel than the sword; no studied insults on religion, morals, or manners; no spoil; no confiscation; no citizen beggared; none imprisoned; none exiled; the whole was effected with a policy, a discretion, an unanimity and secrecy, such as have never been before known on any occasion; but such wonderful conduct was reserved for this glo-

rious conspiracy in favor of the true and genuine rights and interests of men. Happy people, if they know to proceed as they have begun! Happy prince, worthy to begin with splendor, or to close with glory, a race of patriots and of kings: and to leave

> A name, which ev'ry wind to heav'n would bear,
> Which men to speak, and angels joy to hear.

To finish all—this great good, as in the instant it is, contains in it the seeds of all further improvement; and may be considered as in a regular progress, because founded on similar principles, towards the stable excellency of a British constitution.

Here was a matter for congratulation and for festive remembrance through ages. Here moralists and divines might indeed relax in their temperance to exhilarate their humanity. But mark the character of our faction. All their enthusiasm is kept for the French revolution. They cannot pretend that France had stood so much in need of a change as Poland. They cannot pretend that Poland has not obtained a better system of liberty or of government than it enjoyed before. They cannot assert, that the Polish revolution cost more dearly than that of France to the interests and feelings of multitudes of men. But the cold and subordinate light in which they look upon the one, and the pains they take to preach up the other of these revolutions, leave us no choice in fixing on their motives. Both revolutions profess liberty as their object; but in obtaining this object the one proceeds from anarchy to order; the other from order to anarchy. The first secures its liberty by establishing its throne; the other builds its freedom on the subversion of its monarchy. In the one their means are unstained by crimes, and their settlement favors morality. In the other, vice and confusion are in the very essence of their pursuit, and of their enjoyment. The circumstances in which these two events differ, must cause the difference we make in their comparative estimation.

These turn the scale with the societies in favor of France. *Ferrum est quod amant.* The frauds, the violences, the sacrileges, the havoc and ruin of families, the dispersion and exile of the pride and flower of a great country, the disorder, the confusion, the anarchy, the violation of property, the cruel murders, the inhuman confiscations, and in the end the insolent domination of bloody, ferocious, and senseless clubs. These are the things which they love and admire. What men admire and love, they would surely act. Let us see what is done in France; and then let us undervalue any the slightest danger of falling into the hands of such a merciless and savage faction!

'But the leaders of the factious societies are too wild to succeed in this their undertaking.' I hope so. But supposing them wild and absurd, is there no danger but from wise and reflecting men? Perhaps the greatest mischiefs that have happened in the world, have happened from persons as wild as those we think the wildest. In truth, they are the fittest beginners of all great changes. Why encourage men in a mischievous proceeding, because their absurdity may disappoint their malice? 'But noticing them may give them consequence.' Certainly. But they are noticed; and they are noticed, not with reproof, but with that kind of countenance which is given by an *apparent* concurrence (not a *real* one, I am convinced,) of a great party, in the praises of the object which they hold out to imitation.

But I hear a language still more extraordinary, and indeed of such a nature as must suppose, or leave, us at their mercy. It is this—'You know their promptitude in writing, and their diligence in caballing; to write, speak, or act against them, will only stimulate them to new efforts.'—This way of considering the principle of their conduct pays but a poor compliment to these gentlemen. They pretend that their doctrines are infinitely beneficial to mankind; but it seems they would keep them to themselves, if they were not greatly provoked. They are benevolent from spite. Their oracles are like those of *Proteus* (whom some people think they resemble

in many particulars) who never would give his responses unless you used him as ill as possible. These cats, it seems, would not give out their electrical light without having their backs well rubbed. But this is not to do them perfect justice. They are sufficiently communicative. Had they been quiet, the propriety of any agitation of topics on the origin and primary rights of government, in opposition to their private sentiments, might possibly be doubted. But, as it is notorious, that they were proceeding as fast, and as far, as time and circumstances would admit, both in their discussions and cabals—as it is not to be denied, that they had opened a correspondence with a foreign faction, the most wicked the world ever saw, and established anniversaries to commemorate the most monstrous, cruel, and perfidious of all the proceedings of that faction—the question is, whether their conduct was to be regarded in silence, lest our interference should render them outrageous? Then let them deal as they please with the constitution. Let the lady be passive, lest the ravisher should be driven to force. Resistance will only increase his desires. Yes, truly, if the resistance be feigned and feeble. But they who are wedded to the constitution will not act the part of wittols. They will drive such seducers from the house on the first appearance of their love-letters and offered assignations. But if the author of the Reflections, though a vigilant, was not a discreet guardian of the constitution, let them who have the same regard to it, shew themselves as vigilant and more skilful in repelling the attacks of seduction or violence. Their freedom from jealousy is equivocal, and may arise as well from indifference to the object, as from confidence in her virtue.

On their principle, it is the resistance, and not the assault, which produces the danger. I admit, indeed, that if we estimated the danger by the value of the writings, it would be little worthy of our attention: contemptible these writings are in every sense. But they are not the cause, they are the disgusting symptoms, of a frightful distemper. They are not otherwise of consequence than as they shew the evil habit of

the bodies from whence they come. In that light the meanest of them is a serious thing. If however I should underrate them; and if the truth is, that they are not the result, but the cause of the disorders I speak of, surely those who circulate operative poisons, and give, to whatever force they have by their nature, the further operation of their authority and adoption, are to be censured, watched, and, if possible, repressed.

At what distance the direct danger from such factions may be, it is not easy to fix. An adaptation of circumstances to designs and principles is necessary. But these cannot be wanting for any long time in the ordinary course of sublunary affairs. Great discontents frequently arise in the best constituted governments, from causes which no human wisdom can foresee, and no human power can prevent. They occur at uncertain periods, but at periods which are not commonly far asunder. Governments of all kinds are administered only by men; and great mistakes, tending to inflame these discontents, may concur. The indecision of those who happen to rule at the critical time, their supine neglect, or their precipitate and ill-judged attention, may aggravate the public misfortunes. In such a state of things, the principles, now only sown, will shoot out and vegetate in full luxuriance. In such circumstances the minds of the people become sore and ulcerated. They are put out of humor with all public men, and all public parties; they are fatigued with their dissensions; they are irritated at their coalitions; they are made easily to believe, (what much pains are taken to make them believe) that all oppositions are factious, and all courtiers base and servile. From their disgust at men, they are soon led to quarrel with their frame of government, which they presume gives nourishment to the vices, real or supposed, of those who administer in it. Mistaking malignity for sagacity, they are soon led to cast off all hope from a good administration of affairs, and come to think that all reformation depends, not on a change of actors, but upon an alteration in the machinery. Then will be felt the full effect of encouraging doctrines which

tend to make the citizens despise their constitution. Then will be felt the plenitude of the mischief of teaching the people to believe, that all ancient institutions are the results of ignorance; and that all prescriptive government is in its nature usurpation. Then will be felt, in all its energy, the danger of encouraging a spirit of litigation in persons of that immature and imperfect state of knowledge which serves to render them susceptible of doubts, but incapable of their solution. Then will be felt, in all its aggravation, the pernicious consequence of destroying all docility in the minds of those who are not formed for finding their own way in the labyrinths of political theory, and are made to reject the clue, and to disdain the guide. Then will be felt, and too late will be acknowledged, the ruin which follows the disjoining of religion from the state; the separation of morality from policy; and the giving conscience no concern and no coactive or coercive force in the most material of all the social ties, the principle of our obligations to government.

I know too, that besides this vain, contradictory, and self-destructive security, which some men derive from the habitual attachment of the people to this constitution, whilst they suffer it with a sort of sportive acquiescence to be brought into contempt before their faces, they have other grounds for removing all apprehension from their minds. They are of opinion, that there are too many men of great hereditary estates and influence in the kingdom, to suffer the establishment of the leveling system which has taken place in France. This is very true, if in order to guide the power, which now attends their property, these men possess the wisdom which is involved in early fear. But if through a supine security, to which such fortunes are peculiarly liable, they neglect the use of their influence in the season of their power, on the first derangement of society, the nerves of their strength will be cut. Their estates, instead of being the means of their security, will become the very causes of their danger. Instead of bestowing influence they will excite rapacity. They will be looked to as a prey.

Such will be the impotent condition of those men of great hereditary estates, who indeed dislike the designs that are carried on, but whose dislike is rather that of spectators, than of parties that may be concerned in the catastrophe of the piece. But riches do not in all cases secure even an inert and passive resistance. There are always, in that description, men whose fortunes, when their minds are once vitiated by passion or by evil principle, are by no means a security from their actually taking their part against the public tranquillity. We see to what low and despicable passions of all kinds many men in that class are ready to sacrifice the patrimonial estates, which might be perpetuated in their families with splendor, and with the fame of hereditary benefactors to mankind from generation to generation. Do we not see how lightly people treat their fortunes when under the influence of the passion of gaming? The game of ambition or resentment will be played by many of the rich and great, as desperately, and with as much blindness to the consequences, as any other game. Was he a man of no rank or fortune, who first set on foot the disturbances which have ruined France? Passion blinded him to the consequences, so far as they concerned himself; and as to the consequences with regard to others, they were no part of his consideration; nor ever will be with those who bear any resemblance to that virtuous patriot and lover of the rights of man.

There is also a time of insecurity, when interests of all sorts become objects of speculation. Then it is, that their very attachment to wealth and importance will induce several persons of opulence to list themselves, and even to take a lead with the party which they think most likely to prevail, in order to obtain to themselves consideration in some new order or disorder of things. They may be led to act in this manner, that they may secure some portion of their own property; and perhaps to become partakers of the spoil of their own order. Those who speculate on change, always make a great number among people of rank and fortune, as well as amongst the low and the indigent.

What security against all this?—All human securities are liable to uncertainty. But if any thing bids fair for the prevention of so great a calamity, it must consist in the use of the ordinary means of just influence in society, whilst those means continue unimpaired. The public judgment ought to receive a proper direction. All weighty men may have their share in so good a work. As yet, notwithstanding the strutting and lying independence of a braggart philosophy, nature maintains her rights, and great names have great prevalence. Two such men as Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, adding to their authority in a point in which they concur, even by their disunion in every thing else, might frown these wicked opinions out of the kingdom. But if the influence of either of them, or the influence of men like them, should, against their serious intentions, be otherwise perverted, they may countenance opinions which (as I have said before, and could wish over and over again to press,) they may in vain attempt to control. In their theory, these doctrines admit no limit, no qualification whatsoever. No man can say how far he will go, who joins with those who are avowedly going to the utmost extremities. What security is there for stopping short at all in these wild conceits? Why, neither more nor less than this—that the moral sentiments of some few amongst them do put some check on their savage theories. But let us take care. The moral sentiments, so nearly connected with early prejudice as to be almost one and the same thing, will assuredly not live long under a discipline, which has for its basis the destruction of all prejudices, and the making the mind proof against all dread of consequences flowing from the pretended truths that are taught by their philosophy.

In this school the moral sentiments must grow weaker and weaker every day. The more cautious of these teachers, in laying down their maxims, draw as much of the conclusion as suits, not with their premises, but with their policy. They trust the rest to the sagacity of their pupils. Others, and these are the most vaunted for their spirit, not only lay down the same premises, but boldly draw the conclusions to the

destruction of our whole constitution in church and state. But are these conclusions truly drawn? Yes, most certainly. Their principles are wild and wicked. But let justice be done even to frenzy and villany. These teachers are perfectly systematic. No man who assumes their grounds can tolerate the British constitution in church or state. These teachers profess to scorn all mediocrity; to engage for perfection; to proceed by the simplest and shortest course. They build their politics, not on convenience but on truth; and they profess to conduct men to certain happiness by the assertion of their undoubted rights. With them there is no compromise. All other governments are usurpations, which justify and even demand resistance.

Their principles always go to the extreme. They who go with the principles of the ancient whigs, which are those contained in Mr. Burke's book, never can go too far. They may indeed stop short of some hazardous and ambiguous excellence, which they will be taught to postpone to any reasonable degree of good they may actually possess. The opinions maintained in that book never can lead to an extreme, because their foundation is laid in an opposition to extremes. The foundation of government is there laid, not in imaginary rights of men, (which at best is a confusion of judicial with civil principles) but in political convenience, and in human nature; either as that nature is universal, or as it is modified by local habits and social aptitudes. The foundation of government (those who have read that book will recollect) is laid in a provision for our wants, and in a conformity to our duties; it is to purvey for the one; it is to enforce the other. These doctrines do of themselves gravitate to a middle point, or to some point near a middle. They suppose indeed a certain portion of liberty to be essential to all good government; but they infer that this liberty is to be blended into the government; to harmonize with its forms and its rules; and to be made subordinate to its end. Those who are not with that book are with its opposite. For there is no medium besides the medium itself. That medium is not such, be-

cause it is found there; but it is found there, because it is conformable to truth and nature. In this we do not follow the author; but we and the author travel together upon the same safe and middle path.

The theory contained in his book is not to furnish principles for making a new constitution, but for illustrating the principles of a constitution already made. It is a theory drawn from the *fact* of our government. They who oppose it are bound to shew, that his theory militates with that fact. Otherwise, their quarrel is not with his book, but with the constitution of their country. The whole scheme of our mixed constitution is to prevent any one of its principles from being carried as far, as taken by itself, and theoretically, it would go. Allow that to be the true policy of the British system, then most of the faults with which that system stands charged will appear to be, not imperfections into which it has inadvertently fallen, but excellences which it has studiously sought. To avoid the perfections of extreme, all its several parts are so constituted, as not alone to answer their own several ends, but also each to limit and control the others: insomuch, that take which of the principles you please—you will find its operation checked and stopped at a certain point. The whole movement stands still rather than that any part should proceed beyond its boundary. From thence it results, that in the British constitution, there is a perpetual treaty and compromise going on, sometimes openly, sometimes with less observation. To him who contemplates the British constitution, as to him who contemplates the subordinate material world, it will always be a matter of his most curious investigation, to discover the secret of this mutual limitation.

> ———*Finita* potestas denique *cuique*
> Quanam sit ratione, atque alte terminus hærens?

They who have acted, as in France they have done, upon a scheme wholly different, and who aim at the abstract and unlimited perfection of power in the popular part, can be of

no service to us in any of our political arrangements. They who in their headlong career have overpassed the goal, can furnish no example to those who aim to go no further. The temerity of such speculators is no more an example than the timidity of others. The one sort scorns the right; the other fears it; both miss it. But those who by violence go beyond the barrier, are without question the most mischievous; because to go beyond it they overturn and destroy it. To say they have spirit, is to say nothing in their praise. The untempered spirit of madness, blindness, immorality, and impiety, deserves no commendation. He that sets his house on fire because his fingers are frost-bitten, can never be a fit instructer in the method of providing our habitations with a cheerful and salutary warmth. We want no foreign examples to rekindle in us the flame of liberty. The example of our own ancestors is abundantly sufficient to maintain the spirit of freedom in its full vigor, and to qualify it in all its exertions. The example of a wise, moral, well-natured, and well-tempered spirit of freedom, is that alone which can be useful to us, or in the least degree reputable or safe. Our fabric is so constituted; one part of it bears so much on the other, the parts are so made for one another, and for nothing else, that to introduce any foreign matter into it, is to destroy it.

What has been said of the Roman empire, is at least as true of the British constitution—"*Octingentorum annorum fortuna, disciplinaque, compages hæc coaluit; quæ convelli sine convellentium exitio non potest.*" This British constitution has not been struck out at an heat by a set of presumptuous men, like the assembly of pettifoggers run mad in Paris.

> "'T is not the hasty product of a day,
> But the well-ripen'd fruit of wise delay."

It is the result of the thoughts of many minds, in many ages. It is no simple, no superficial thing, nor to be estimated by superficial understandings. An ignorant man, who is not

fool enough to meddle with his clock, is however sufficiently confident to think he can safely take to pieces, and put together at his pleasure, a moral machine of another guise, importance and complexity, composed of far other wheels, and springs, and balances, and counteracting and coöperating powers. Men little think how immorally they act in rashly meddling with what they do not understand. Their delusive good intention is no sort of excuse for their presumption. They who truly mean well must be fearful of acting ill. The British constitution may have its advantages pointed out to wise and reflecting minds; but it is of too high an order of excellence to be adapted to those which are common. It takes in too many views, it makes too many combinations, to be so much as comprehended by shallow and superficial understandings. Profound thinkers will know it in its reason and spirit. The less inquiring will recognise it in their feelings and their experience. They will thank God they have a standard, which, in the most essential point of this great concern, will put them on a par with the most wise and knowing.

If we do not take to our aid the foregone studies of men reputed intelligent and learned, we shall be always beginners. But men must learn somewhere; and the new teachers mean no more than what they effect, as far as they succeed, that is, to deprive men of the benefit of the collected wisdom of mankind, and to make them blind disciples of their own particular presumption. Talk to these deluded creatures (all the disciples and most of the masters) who are taught to think themselves so newly fitted up and furnished, and you will find nothing in their houses but the refuse of *Knaves Acre;* nothing but the rotten stuff, worn out in the service of delusion and sedition in all ages, and which being newly furbished up, patched, and varnished, serves well enough for those who being unacquainted with the conflict which has always been maintained between the sense and the nonsense of mankind, know nothing of the former existence and the ancient refutation of the same follies. It is near two thousand years since

it has been observed, that these devices of ambition, avarice, and turbulence, were antiquated. They are, indeed, the most ancient of all common places; common places, sometimes of good and necessary causes; more frequently of the worst, but which decide upon neither.—*Eadem semper causa, libido et avaritia, et mutandarum rerum amor. Ceterum libertas et speciosa nomina pretexuntur; nec quisquam alienum servitium, et dominationem sibi concupivit, ut non eadem ista vocabula usurparet.*

Rational and experienced men, tolerably well know, and have always known, how to distinguish between true and false liberty; and between the genuine adherence and the false pretence to what is true. But none, except those who are profoundly studied, can comprehend the elaborate contrivance of a fabric fitted to unite private and public liberty with public force, with order, with peace, with justice, and, above all, with the institutions formed for bestowing permanence and stability through ages, upon this invaluable whole.

Place, for instance, before your eyes, such a man as Montesquieu. Think of a genius not born in every country, or every time; a man gifted by nature with a penetrating aquiline eye; with a judgment prepared with the most extensive erudition; with an herculean robustness of mind, and nerves not to be broken with labor; a man who could spend twenty years in one pursuit. Think of a man, like the universal patriarch in Milton (who had drawn up before him in his prophetic vision the whole series of the generations which were to issue from his loins) a man capable of placing in review, after having brought together, from the east, the west, the north, and the south, from the coarseness of the rudest barbarism to the most refined and subtle civilization, all the schemes of government which had ever prevailed amongst mankind, weighing, measuring, collating, and comparing them all, joining fact with theory, and calling into council, upon all this infinite assemblage of things, all the speculations which have fatigued the understandings of profound reasoners in all times! Let us then consider, that all

these were but so many preparatory steps to qualify a man, and such a man, tinctured with no national prejudice, with no domestic affection, to admire, and to hold out to the admiration of mankind the constitution of England! And shall we Englishmen revoke to such a suit? Shall we, when so much more than he has produced, remains still to be understood and admired, instead of keeping ourselves in the schools of real science, choose for our teachers men incapable of being taught, whose only claim to know is, that they have never doubted; from whom we can learn nothing but their own indocility; who would teach us to scorn what in the silence of our hearts we ought to adore?

Different from them are all the great critics. They have taught us one essential rule. I think the excellent and philosophic artist, a true judge, as well as a perfect follower of nature, Sir Joshua Reynolds, has somewhere applied it, or something like it, in his own profession. It is this, that if ever we should find ourselves disposed not to admire those writers or artists, Livy and Virgil for instance, Raphael or Michael Angelo, whom all the learned had admired, not to follow our own fancies, but to study them until we know how and what we ought to admire; and if we cannot arrive at this combination of admiration with knowledge, rather to believe that we are dull, than that the rest of the world has been imposed on. It is as good a rule, at least, with regard to this admired constitution. We ought to understand it according to our measure; and to venerate where we are not able presently to comprehend.

Such admirers were our fathers, to whom we owe this splendid inheritance. Let us improve it with zeal, but with fear. Let us follow our ancestors, men not without a rational, though without an exclusive confidence in themselves; who, by respecting the reason of others, who, by looking backward as well as forward, by the modesty as well as by the energy of their minds, went on, insensibly drawing this constitution nearer and nearer to its perfection by never departing from its fundamental principles, nor introducing any

amendment which had not a subsisting root in the laws, constitution, and usages of the kingdom. Let those who have the trust of political or of natural authority ever keep watch against the desperate enterprises of innovation. Let even their benevolence be fortified and armed. They have before their eyes the example of a monarch, insulted, degraded, confined, deposed; his family dispersed, scattered, imprisoned; his wife insulted to his face like the vilest of the sex, by the vilest of all populace; himself three times dragged by these wretches in an infamous triumph; his children torn from him, in violation of the first right of nature, and given into the tuition of the most desperate and impious of the leaders of desperate and impious clubs; his revenues dilapidated and plundered; his magistrates murdered; his clergy proscribed, persecuted famished; his nobility degraded in their rank, undone in their fortunes, fugitives in their persons; his armies corrupted and ruined; his whole people impoverished, disunited, dissolved; whilst through the bars of his prison, and amidst the bayonets of his keepers, he hears the tumult of two conflicting factions, equally wicked and abandoned, who agree in principles, in dispositions, and in objects, but who tear each other to pieces about the most effectual means of obtaining their common end; the one contending to preserve for awhile his name, and his person, the more easily to destroy the royal authority—the other clamoring to cut off the name, the person, and the monarchy together, by one sacrilegious execution. All this accumulation of calamity, the greatest that ever fell upon one man, has fallen upon his head, because he had left his virtues unguarded by caution; because he was not taught that where power is concerned, he who will confer benefits must take security against ingratitude.

I have stated the calamities which have fallen upon a great prince and nation, because they were not alarmed at the approach of danger, and because, what commonly happens to men surprised, they lost all resource when they were caught in it. When I speak of danger, I certainly mean to address

myself to those who consider the prevalence of the new whig doctrines as an evil.

The whigs of this day have before them, in this Appeal, their constitutional ancestors. They have the doctors of the modern school. They will choose for themselves. The author of the Reflections has chosen for himself. If a new order is coming on, and all the political opinions must pass away as dreams, which our ancestors have worshiped as revelations, I say for him, that he would rather be the last (as certainly he is the least) of that race of men, than the first and greatest of those who have coined to themselves whig principles from a French die, unknown to the impress of our fathers in the constitution.

LETTER

TO A PEER OF IRELAND,

ON

THE PENAL LAWS AGAINST IRISH CATHOLICS,

PREVIOUS TO THE LATE

REPEAL OF A PART THEREOF,

IN THE

SESSION OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT,

HELD A. D. 1782.

LETTER.

Charles-street, London, Feb. 21, 1782.

My Lord,

I am obliged to your lordship for your communication of the heads of Mr. Gardiner's bill. I had received it, in an earlier stage of its progress, from Mr. Braughall; and I am still in that gentleman's debt, as I have not made him the proper return for the favor he has done me. Business, to which I was more immediately called, and in which my sentiments had the weight of one vote, occupied me every moment since I received his letter. This first morning, which I can call my own, I give with great cheerfulness to the subject on which your lordship has done me the honor of desiring my opinion. I have read the heads of the bill, with the amendments. Your lordship is too well acquainted with men, and with affairs, to imagine that any true judgment can be formed on the value of a great measure of policy from the perusal of a piece of paper. At present I am much in the dark with regard to the state of the country, which the intended law is to be applied to.* It is not easy for me to determine whether or no it was wise (for the sake of expunging the black letter of laws, which, menacing as they were in the language, were every day fading into disuse,) solemnly to re-affirm the principles, and to re-enact the provisions of a code of statutes, by which you are totally excluded from the privileges of

* The sketch of the bill sent to Mr. Burke, along with the repeal of some acts, re-affirmed many others in the penal code. It was altered afterwards, and the clauses re-affirming the incapacities left out; but they all still exist, and are in full force.

THE COMMONWEALTH, from the highest to the lowest, from the most material of the civil professions, from the army, and even from education, where alone education is to be had.

Whether this scheme of indulgence, grounded at once on contempt and jealousy, has a tendency gradually to produce something better and more liberal, I cannot tell, for want of having the actual map of the country. If this should be the case, it was right in you to accept it, such as it is. But if this should be one of the experiments, which have sometimes been made before the temper of the nation was ripe for a real reformation, I think it may possibly have ill effects, by disposing the penal matter in a more systematic order, and thereby fixing a permanent bar against any relief that is truly substantial. The whole merit or demerit of the measure depends upon the plans and dispositions of those by whom the act was made, concurring with the general temper of the Protestants of Ireland, and their aptitude to admit in time of some part of that equality, without which you never can be FELLOW-CITIZENS. Of all this I am wholly ignorant. All my correspondence with men of public importance in Ireland has for some time totally ceased. On the first bill for the relief of the ROMAN CATHOLICS of Ireland, I was, without any call of mine, consulted both on your side of the water and on this. On the present occasion, I have not heard a word from any man in office; and know as little of the intentions of the British government, as I know of the temper of the Irish parliament. I do not find that any opposition was made by the principal persons of the minority in the house of commons, or that any is apprehended from them in the house of lords. The whole of the difficulty seems to lie with the principal men in government, under whose protection this bill is supposed to be brought in. This violent opposition and cordial support, coming from one and the same quarter, appears to me something mysterious, and hinders me from being able to make any clear judgment of the merit of the present measure, as compared with the actual state of the country, and the general views of government, without which one can say nothing that may not be very erroneous.

To look at the bill, in the abstract, it is neither more nor less than a renewed act of UNIVERSAL, UNMITIGATED, INDISPENSABLE, EXCEPTIONLESS DISQUALIFICATION.

One would imagine, that a bill, inflicting such a multitude of incapacities, had followed on the heels of a conquest, made by a very fierce enemy, under the impression of recent animosity and resentment. No man, on reading that bill, could imagine he was reading an act of amnesty and indulgence, following a recital of the good behavior of those who are the objects of it; which recital stood at the head of the bill, as it was first introduced: but, I suppose for its incongruity with the body of the piece, was afterwards omitted. This I say on memory. It however still recites the oath, and that catholics ought to be considered as good and loyal subjects to his majesty, his crown and government. Then follows an universal exclusion of those GOOD and LOYAL subjects from every (even the lowest) office of trust and profit; from any vote at an election; from any privilege in a town corporate; from being even a freeman of such a corporation; from serving on grand juries; from a vote at a vestry; from having a gun in his house; from being a barrister, attorney, or solicitor, &c. &c. &c.

This has surely much more the air of a table of proscription, than an act of grace. What must we suppose the laws concerning those *good* subjects to have been, of which this is a relaxation? I know well that there is a cant language current, about the difference between an exclusion from employments even to the most rigorous extent, and an exclusion from the natural benefits arising from a man's own industry. I allow, that under some circumstances, the difference is very material in point of justice, and that there are considerations which may render it advisable for a wise government to keep the leading parts of every branch of civil and military administration in hands of the best trust: but a total exclusion from the commonwealth is a very different thing. When a government subsists (as governments formerly did) on an estate of its own, with but few and incon-

siderable revenues drawn from the subject, then the few officers which existed in such establishments were naturally at the disposal of that government which paid the salaries out of its own coffers; there an exclusive preference could hardly merit the name of proscription. Almost the whole produce of a man's industry at that time remained in his own purse to maintain his family. But times alter, and the *whole* estate of government is from private contribution. When a very great portion of the labor of individuals goes to the state, and is by the state again refunded to individuals, through the medium of offices, and in this circuitous progress from the private to the public, and from the public again to the private fund, the families from whom the revenue is taken are indemnified, and an equitable balance between the government and the subject is established. But if a great body of the people who contribute to this state lottery, are excluded from all the prizes, the stopping the circulation with regard to them may be a most cruel hardship, amounting in effect to being double and treble taxed; and it will be felt as such to the very quick by all the families high and low of those hundreds of thousands who are denied their chance in the returned fruits of their own industry. This is the thing meant by those who look upon the public revenue only as a spoil; and will naturally wish to have as few as possible concerned in the division of the booty. If a state should be so unhappy as to think it cannot subsist without such a barbarous proscription, the persons so proscribed ought to be indemnified by the remission of a large part of their taxes, by an immunity from the offices of public burden, and by an exemption from being pressed into any military or naval service.

Common sense and common justice dictate this at least, as some sort of compensation to a people for their slavery. How many families are incapable of existing, if the little offices of the revenue, and little military commissions, are denied them! To deny them at home, and to make the happiness of acquiring some of them somewhere else, felony, or high treason, is a piece of cruelty, in which, till very lately, I did not suppose

this age capable of persisting. Formerly a similarity of religion made a sort of country for a man in some quarter or other. A refugee for religion was a protected character. Now, the reception is cold indeed: and therefore as the asylum abroad is destroyed, the hardship at home is doubled. This hardship is the more intolerable, because the professions are shut up. The church is so of course. Much is to be said on that subject, in regard to them, and to the protestant dissenters. But that is a chapter by itself. I am sure I wish well to that church, and think its ministers among the very best citizens of your country. However, such as it is, a great walk in life is forbidden ground to seventeen hundred thousand of the inhabitants of Ireland. Why are they excluded from the law? Do not they expend money in their suits? Why may not they indemnify themselves, by profiting, in the persons of some, for the losses incurred by others? Why may not they have persons of confidence, whom they may, if they please, employ in the agency of their affairs? The exclusion from the law, from grand juries, from sheriffships, and undersheriffships, as well as from freedom in any corporation, may subject them to dreadful hardships, as it may exclude them wholly from all that is beneficial, and expose them to all that is mischievous in a trial by jury. This was manifestly within my own observation, for I was three times in Ireland from the year 1760 to the year 1767, where I had sufficient means of information, concerning the inhuman proceedings (among which were many cruel murders, besides an infinity of outrages and oppressions, unknown before in a civilized age,) which prevailed during that period in consequence of a pretended conspiracy among *Roman catholics* against the king's government. I could dilate upon the mischiefs that may happen, from those which have happened, upon this head of disqualification, if it were at all necessary.

The head of exclusion from votes for members of parliament is closely connected with the former. When you cast your eye on the statute book, you will see that no *catholic*, even in the ferocious acts of queen Anne, was disabled from

voting on account of his religion. The only conditions required for that privilege, were the oaths of allegiance and abjuration—both oaths relative to a civil concern. Parliament has since added another oath of the same kind: and yet a house of commons adding to the securities of government, in proportion as its danger is confessedly lessened, and professing both confidence and indulgence, in effect takes away the privilege left by an act full of jealousy, and professing persecution.

The taking away of a vote is the taking away the shield which the subject has, not only against the oppression of power, but that worst of all oppressions, the persecution of private society, and private manners. No candidate for parliamentary influence is obliged to the least attention towards them, either in cities or counties. On the contrary, if they should become obnoxious to any bigoted or malignant people amongst whom they live, it will become the interest of those who court popular favor, to use the numberless means which always reside in magistracy and influence to oppress them. The proceedings in a certain county in Munster, during the unfortunate period I have mentioned, read a strong lecture on the cruelty of depriving men of that shield, on account of their speculative opinions. The protestants of Ireland feel well and naturally on the hardship of being bound by laws in the enacting of which they do not directly or indirectly vote. The bounds of these matters are nice, and hard to be settled in theory, and perhaps they have been pushed too far. But how they can avoid the necessary application of the principles they use in their disputes with others, to their disputes with their fellow-citizens, I know not.

It is true, the words of this act do not create a disability; but they clearly and evidently suppose it. There are few *catholic* freeholders to take the benefit of the privilege, if they were permitted to partake it; but the manner in which this very right in freeholders at large is defended, is not on the idea that the freeholders do really and truly represent the people; but that all people being capable of obtaining free-

holds, all those, who, by their industry and sobriety merit this privilege, have the means of arriving at votes. It is the same with the corporations.

The laws against foreign education are clearly the very worst part of the old code. Besides your laity, you have the succession of about four thousand clergymen to provide for. These having no lucrative objects in prospect, are taken very much out of the lower orders of the people. At home, they have no means whatsoever provided for their attaining a clerical education, or indeed any education at all. When I was in Paris, about seven years ago, I looked at every thing, and lived with every kind of people, as well as my time admitted. I saw there the Irish college of the Lombard, which seemed to me a very good place of education, under excellent orders and regulations, and under the government of a very prudent and learned man (the late Dr. KELLY.) This college was possessed of an annual fixed revenue of more than a thousand pounds a year; the greatest part of which had arisen from the legacies and benefactions of persons educated in that college, and who had obtained promotions in France, from the emolument of which promotions they made this grateful return. One in particular I remember, to the amount of ten thousand livres, annually, as it is recorded on the donor's monument in their chapel.

It has been the custom of poor persons in Ireland, to pick up such knowledge of the Latin tongue as, under the general discouragements, and occasional pursuits of magistracy, they were able to acquire; and receiving orders at home, were sent abroad to obtain a clerical education. By officiating in petty chaplainships, and performing, now and then, certain offices of religion for small gratuities, they received the means of maintaining themselves, until they were able to complete their education. Through such difficulties and discouragements, many of them have arrived at a very considerable proficiency, so as to be marked and distinguished abroad. These persons afterwards, by being sunk in the most abject poverty, despised and ill-treated by the higher orders among

protestants, and not much better esteemed or treated, even by the few persons of fortune of their own persuasion; and contracting the habits and ways of thinking of the poor and uneducated, among whom they were obliged to live, in a few years retained little or no traces of the talents and acquirements, which distinguished them in the early periods of their lives. Can we, with justice, cut them off from the use of places of education, founded, for the greater part, from the economy of poverty and exile, without providing something that is equivalent at home?

Whilst this restraint of foreign and domestic education was part of an horrible and impious system of servitude, the members were well fitted to the body. To render men patient, under a deprivation of all the rights of human nature, every thing which could give them a knowledge or feeling of those rights was rationally forbidden. To render humanity fit to be insulted, it was fit that it should be degraded. But when we profess to restore men to the capacity for property, it is equally irrational and unjust to deny them the power of improving their minds as well as their fortunes. Indeed, I have ever thought the prohibition of the means of improving our rational nature, to be the worst species of tyranny that the insolence and perverseness of mankind ever dared to exercise. This goes to all men, in all situations, to whom education can be denied.

Your lordship mentions a proposal which came from my friend the provost, whose benevolence and enlarged spirit I am perfectly convinced of; which is, the proposal of erecting a few sizerships in the college, for the education (I suppose) of Roman catholic clergymen.* He certainly meant it well; but, coming from such a man as he is, it is a strong instance of the danger of suffering any description of men to fall into entire contempt. The charities intended for them are not perceived to be fresh insults; and the true nature of their wants and necessities being unknown, remedies, wholly unsuitable

* It appears that Mr. Hutchinson meant this only as one of the means for their relief in point of education.

to the nature of their complaint, are provided for them. It is to feed a sick Gentoo with beef broth, and to foment his wounds with brandy. If the other parts of the university were open to them, as well on the foundation as otherwise, the offering of sizerships would be a proportioned part of a *general* kindness. But when every thing *liberal* is withheld, and only that which is *servile* is permitted, it is easy to conceive upon what footing they must be in such a place.

Mr. Hutchinson must well know the regard and honor I have for him; and he cannot think my dissenting from him in this particular, arises from a disregard of his opinion: it only shews that I think he has lived in Ireland. To have any respect for the character and person of a popish priest there——oh! 'tis an uphill work indeed. But until we come to respect what stands in a respectable light with others, we are very deficient in the temper which qualifies us to make any laws and regulations about them. It even disqualifies us from being charitable to them with any effect or judgment.

When we are to provide for the education of any body of men, we ought seriously to consider the particular functions they are to perform in life. A Roman catholic clergyman is the minister of a very ritual religion: and by his profession subject to many restraints. His life is a life full of strict observances, and his duties are of a laborious nature towards himself, and of the highest possible trust towards others. The duty of confession alone is sufficient to set in the strongest light the necessity of his having an appropriated mode of education. The theological opinions and peculiar rites of one religion never can be properly taught in universities, founded for the purposes and on the principles of another, which in many points are directly opposite. If a Roman catholic clergyman, intended for celibacy, and the function of confession, is not strictly bred in a seminary where these things are respected, inculcated and enforced, as sacred, and not made the subject of derision and obloquy, he will be ill fitted for the former, and the latter will be indeed in his hands a terrible instrument.

There is a great resemblance between the whole frame and constitution of the Greek and Latin churches. The secular clergy, in the former, by being married, living under little restraint, and having no particular education suited to their function, are universally fallen into such contempt, that they are never permitted to aspire to the dignities of their own church. It is not held respectful to call them *papas*, their true and ancient appellation, but those who wish to address them with civility, always call them *hieromonachi*. In consequence of this disrespect, which I venture to say, in such a church, must be the consequence of a secular life, a very great degeneracy from reputable christian manners has taken place throughout almost the whole of that great member of the christian church.

It was so with the Latin church, before the restraint on marriage. Even that restraint gave rise to the greatest disorders before the council of Trent, which together with the emulation raised, and the good examples given by the reformed churches, wherever they were in view of each other, has brought on that happy amendment, which we see in the Latin communion, both at home and abroad.

The council of Trent has wisely introduced the discipline of seminaries, by which priests are not trusted for a clerical institution, even to the severe discipline of their colleges; but after they pass through them, are frequently, if not for the greater part, obliged to pass through peculiar methods, having their particular ritual function in view. It is in a great measure to this, and to similar methods used in foreign education, that the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland, miserably provided for, living among low and ill-regulated people, without any discipline of sufficient force to secure good manners, have been prevented from becoming an intolerable nuisance to the country, instead of being, as I conceive they generally are, a very great service to it.

The ministers of protestant churches require a different mode of education, more liberal and more fit for the ordinary intercourse of life. That religion having little hold on

the minds of people by external ceremonies, and extraordinary observances, or separate habits of living, the clergy make up the deficiency by cultivating their minds with all kinds of ornamental learning, which the liberal provision made in England and Ireland for the parochial clergy, (to say nothing of the ample church preferments, with little or no duties annexed) and the comparative lightness of parochial duties, enables the greater part of them in some considerable degree to accomplish.

This learning, which I believe to be pretty general, together with an higher situation, and more chastened by the opinion of mankind, forms a sufficient security for the morals of the established clergy, and for their sustaining their clerical character with dignity. It is not necessary to observe, that all these things are, however, collateral to their function; and that except in preaching, which may be and is supplied, and often best supplied, out of printed books, little else is necessary for a protestant minister, than to be able to read the English language; I mean for the exercise of his function, not to the qualification of his admission to it. But a popish parson in Ireland may do very well without any considerable classical erudition, or any proficiency in pure or mixed mathematics, or any knowledge of civil history. Even if the catholic clergy should possess those acquisitions, as at first many of them do, they soon lose them in the painful course of professional and parochial duties: but they must have all the knowledge, and what is to them more important than the knowledge, the discipline necessary to those duties. All modes of education, conducted by those whose minds are cast in another mould, as I may say, and whose original ways of thinking are formed upon the reverse pattern, must be to them not only useless, but mischievous. Just as I should suppose the education in a popish ecclesiastical seminary would be ill fitted for a protestant clergyman. To educate a catholic priest in a protestant seminary would be much worse. The protestant educated amongst catholics has only something to reject: what he keeps may be useful.

But a catholic priest learns little for his peculiar purpose and duty in a protestant college.

All this, my lord, I know very well, will pass for nothing with those who wish that the popish clergy should be illiterate, and in a situation to produce contempt and detestation. Their minds are wholly taken up with party squabbles, and I have neither leisure nor inclination to apply any part of what I have to say, to those who never think of religion, or of the commonwealth, in any other light, than as they tend to the prevalence of some faction in either. I speak on a supposition, that there is a disposition *to take the state in the condition in which it is found*, and to improve it *in that state* to the best advantage. Hitherto the plan for the government of Ireland has been, to sacrifice the civil prosperity of the nation to its religious improvement. But if people in power there are at length come to entertain other ideas, they will consider the good order, decorum, virtue, and morality of every description of men among them, as of infinitely greater importance than the struggle (for it is nothing better) to change those descriptions by means which put to hazard, objects, which, in my poor opinion, are of more importance to religion and to the state, than all the polemical matter which has been agitated among men from the beginning of the world to this hour.

On this idea, an education fitted *to each order and division of men, such as they are found*, will be thought an affair rather to be encouraged than discountenanced: and until institutions at home, suitable to the occasions and necessities of the people, are established, and which are armed, as they are abroad, with authority to coerce the young men to be formed in them, by a strict and severe discipline,—the means they have, at present, of a cheap and effectual education in other countries, should not continue to be prohibited by penalties and modes of inquisition, not fit to be mentioned to ears that are organized to the chaste sounds of equity and justice.

Before I had written thus far, I heard of a scheme of giving to the Castle the patronage of the presiding members of the

catholic clergy. At first I could scarcely credit it: for I believe it is the first time that the presentation to other people's alms has been desired in any country. If the state provides a suitable maintenance and temporality for the governing members of the Irish Roman catholic church, and for the clergy under them, I should think the project, however improper in other respects, to be by no means unjust. But to deprive a poor people, who maintain a second set of clergy, out of the miserable remains of what is left after taxing and tithing—to deprive them of the disposition of their own charities among their own communion, would, in my opinion, be an intolerable hardship. Never were the members of one religious sect, fit to appoint the pastors to another. Those who have no regard for their welfare, reputation, or internal quiet, will not appoint such as are proper. The seraglio of Constantinople is as equitable as we are, whether catholics or protestants: and where their own sect is concerned, full as religious. But the sport which they make of the miserable dignities of the Greek church, the little factions of the harem, to which they make them subservient, the continual sale to which they expose and reëxpose the same dignity, and by which they squeeze all the inferior orders of the clergy, is (for I have had particular means of being acquainted with it) nearly equal to all the other oppressions together, exercised by mussulmen over the unhappy members of the Oriental church. It is a great deal to suppose that even the present Castle would nominate bishops for the Roman church of Ireland, with a religious regard for its welfare. Perhaps they cannot, perhaps they dare not do it.

But suppose them to be as well inclined as I know that I am, to do the catholics all kind of justice, I declare I would not, if it were in my power, take that patronage on myself. I know I ought not to do it. I belong to another community; and it would be intolerable usurpation for me to affect such authority, where I conferred no benefit, or even if I did confer (as in some degree the seraglio does) temporal advantages. But, allowing that the *present* Castle finds itself fit to admin-

ister the government of a church which they solemnly forswear and forswear with very hard words and many evil epithets, and that as often as they qualify themselves for the power which is to give this very patronage, or to give any thing else that they desire; yet they cannot ensure themselves that a man like the late lord Chesterfield will not succeed to them. This man, while he was duping the credulity of papists with fine words in private, and commending their good behavior during a rebellion in Great Britain, (as it well deserved to be commended and rewarded) was capable of urging penal laws against them in a speech from the throne, and of stimulating with provocatives the wearied and half-exhausted bigotry of the then parliament of Ireland. They set to work, but they were at a loss what to do; for they had already almost gone through every contrivance which could *waste the vigor* of their country: but, after much struggle, they produced a child of their old age, the shocking and unnatural act about marriages, which tended to finish the scheme for making the people not only two distinct parties for ever, but keeping them as two distinct species in the same land. Mr. Gardiner's humanity was shocked at it, as one of the worst parts of that truly barbarous system, if one could well settle the preference, where almost all the parts were outrages on the rights of humanity, and the laws of nature.

Suppose an atheist, playing the part of a bigot, should be in power again in that country, do you believe that he would faithfully and religiously administer the trust of appointing pastors to a church, which, wanting every other support, stands in tenfold need of ministers who will be dear to the people committed to their charge, and who will exercise a really paternal authority amongst them? But if the superior power was always in a disposition to dispense conscientiously, and like an upright trustee and guardian of these rights which he holds for those with whom he is at variance, has he the capacity and means of doing it? How can the lord lieutenant form the least judgment of their merits, so as to discern which of the popish priests is fit to be made a bishop? It cannot be:

the idea is ridiculous. He will hand them over to lord lieutenants of counties, justices of the peace, and other persons, who for the purpose of vexing and turning to derision this miserable people, will pick out the worst and most obnoxious they can find amongst the clergy to set over the rest. Whoever is complained against by his brother, will be considered as persecuted: Whoever is censured by his superior, will be looked upon as oppressed: Whoever is careless in his opinions, and loose in his morals, will be called a liberal man, and will be supposed to have incurred hatred, because he was not a bigot. Informers, tale-bearers, perverse and obstinate men, flatterers, who turn their back upon their flock, and court the protestant gentlemen of the country, will be the objects of preferment. And then I run no risk in foretelling, that whatever order, quiet, and morality you have in the country, will be lost. A popish clergy, who are not restrained by the most austere subordination, will become a nuisance, a real public grievance of the heaviest kind, in any country that entertains them: and instead of the great benefit which Ireland does, and has long derived from them, if they are educated without any idea of discipline and obedience, and then put under bishops, who do not owe their station to their good opinion, and whom they cannot respect, that nation will see disorders, of which, bad as things are, it has yet no idea. I do not say this, as thinking the leading men in Ireland would exercise this trust worse than others. Not at all. No man, no set of men living are fit to administer the affairs, or regulate the interior economy of a church to which they are enemies.

As to government, if I might recommend a prudent caution to them,—it would be, to innovate as little as possible, upon speculation, in establishments, from which, as they stand, they experience no material inconvenience to the repose of the country,—*quieta non movere.* I could say a great deal more; but I am tired; and am afraid your lordship is tired too. I have not sat to this letter a single quarter of an hour without interruption. It has grown long, and probably contains many repetitions, from my total want of leisure to digest and con-

solidate my thoughts; and as to my expressions, I could wish to be able perhaps to measure them more exactly. But my intentions are fair, and I certainly mean to offend nobody.

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Thinking over this matter more maturely, I see no reason for altering my opinion in any part. The act, as far as it goes, is good undoubtedly. It amounts, I think, very nearly to a *toleration*, with respect to religious ceremonies; but it puts a new bolt on civil rights, and rivets it to the old one, in such a manner, that neither, I fear, will be easily loosened. What I could have wished would be, to see the civil advantages take the lead: the other of a religious toleration, I conceive, would follow (in a manner) of course. From what I have observed, it is pride, arrogance, and a spirit of domination, and not a bigoted spirit of religion, that has caused and kept up those oppressive statutes. I am sure I have known those who have oppressed papists in their civil rights, exceedingly indulgent to them in their religious ceremonies, and who really wished them to continue catholics, in order to furnish pretences for oppression. These persons never saw a man (by converting) escape out of their power, but with grudging and regret. I have known men, to whom I am not uncharitable in saying, (though they are dead) that they would have become papists in order to oppress protestants; if, being protestants, it was not in their power to oppress papists. It is injustice, and not a mistaken conscience, that has been the principle of persecution, at least as far as it has fallen under my observation. However, as I began, so I end. I do not know the map of the country. Mr. Gardiner, who conducts this great and difficult work, and those who support him, are better judges of the business than I can pretend to be, who have not set my foot in Ireland these sixteen years. I have been given to understand, that I am not considered as a friend to that country: and I know that pains have been taken to lessen the credit that I might have had there.

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I am so convinced of the weakness of interfering in any business, without the opinion of the people in whose business I interfere, that I do not know how to acquit myself of what I have now done.—I have the honor to be, with high regard and esteem,

My Lord,
your lordship's most obedient,
and humble servant, &c.
EDMUND BURKE.

A LETTER

TO

SIR H. LANGRISHE, BART. M. P.

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

ROMAN CATHOLICS OF IRELAND,

AND THE PROPRIETY OF

ADMITTING THEM TO THE ELECTIVE FRANCHISE,

CONSISTENTLY WITH THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE CONSTITUTION

AS ESTABLISHED AT THE REVOLUTION.

1792.

LETTER.

My Dear Sir,

Your remembrance of me, with sentiments of so much kindness, has given me the most sincere satisfaction. It perfectly agrees with the friendly and hospitable reception which my son and I received from you, some time since, when after an absence of twenty-two years, I had the happiness of embracing you, among my few surviving friends.

I really imagined that I should not again interest myself in any public business. I had, to the best of my moderate faculties, paid my club to the society, which I was born in some way or other to serve; and I thought I had a right to put on my night-gown and slippers, and wish a cheerful evening to the good company I must leave behind. But if our resolutions of vigor and exertion are so often broken or procrastinated in the execution, I think we may be excused, if we are not very punctual in fulfilling our engagements to indolence and inactivity. I have indeed no power of action; and am almost a cripple, even with regard to thinking: but you descend with force into the stagnant pool; and you cause such a fermentation, as to cure at least one impotent creature of his lameness, though it cannot enable him either to run or to wrestle.

You see by the paper* I take that I am likely to be long, with malice prepense. You have brought under my view a subject, always difficult, at present critical. It has filled my thoughts, which I wish to lay open to you with the

* The letter is written on folio sheets.

clearness and simplicity which your friendship demands from me. I thank you for the communication of your ideas. I should be still more pleased if they had been more your own. What you hint, I believe to be the case; that if you had not deferred to the judgment of others, our opinions would not differ more materially at this day, than they did when we used to confer on the same subject, so many years ago. If I still persevere in my old opinions, it is no small comfort to me, that it is not with regard to doctrines properly yours, that I discover my indocility.

The case upon which your letter of the 10th of December turns, is hardly before me with precision enough, to enable me to form any very certain judgment upon it. It seems to be some plan of further indulgence proposed for the catholics of Ireland. You observe, that your "general principles are not changed, but that *times and circumstances are altered.*" I perfectly agree with you, that times and circumstances, considered with reference to the public, ought very much to govern our conduct; though I am far from slighting, when applied with discretion to those circumstances, general principles and maxims of policy. I cannot help observing, however, that you have said rather less upon the inapplicability of your own old principles to the *circumstances* that are likely to influence your conduct against these principles, than of the *general* maxims of state, which I can very readily believe not to have great weight with you personally.

In my present state of imperfect information, you will pardon the errors into which I may easily fall. The principles you lay down are, "that the Roman catholics should enjoy every thing *under* the state, but should not be *the state itself.*" And you add, "that when you exclude them from being *a part of the state*, you rather conform to the spirit of the age, than to any abstract doctrine;" but you consider the constitution as already established—that our state is protestant. "It was declared so at the revolution. It was so provided in the acts for settling the succession of the crown:—the king's coronation oath was enjoined, in order to keep it so. The

king, as first magistrate of the state, is obliged to take the oath of abjuration,* and to subscribe the declaration; and, by laws subsequent, every other magistrate and member of the state, legislative and executive, are bound under the same obligation."

As to the plan to which these maxims are applied, I cannot speak, as I told you, positively about it. Because, neither from your letter, nor from any information I have been able to collect, do I find any thing settled, either on the part of the Roman catholics themselves, or on that of any persons who may wish to conduct their affairs in parliament. But if I have leave to conjecture, something is in agitation towards admitting them, under *certain qualifications*, to have *some share* in the election of members of parliament. This I understand is the scheme of those who are entitled to come within your description of persons of consideration, property, and character; and firmly attached to the king and constitution, as by "law established, with a grateful sense of your former concessions, and a patient reliance on the benignity of parliament, for the further mitigation of the laws that still affect them." As to the low, thoughtless, wild and profligate, who have joined themselves with those of other professions, but of the same character; you are not to imagine, that, for a moment, I can suppose them to be met, with any thing else than the manly and enlightened energy of a firm government, supported by the united efforts of all virtuous men, if ever their proceedings should become so considerable as to demand its notice. I really think that such associations should be crushed in their very commencement.

Setting, therefore, this case out of the question, it becomes an object of very serious consideration, whether, because wicked men of *various* descriptions are engaged in seditious courses, the rational, sober, and valuable part of *one* description should not be indulged in their sober and rational expec-

* A small error of fact as to the abjuration oath; but of no importance in the argument.

tations? You, who have looked deeply into the spirit of the popery laws, must be perfectly sensible, that a great part of the present mischief, which we abhor in common (if it at all exists) has arisen from them. Their declared object was to reduce the catholics of Ireland to a miserable populace, without property, without estimation, without education. The professed object was to deprive the few men who, in spite of those laws, might hold or obtain any property amongst them, of all sort of influence or authority over the rest. They divided the nation into two distinct bodies, without common interest, sympathy, or connection. One of these bodies was to possess *all* the franchises, *all* the property, *all* the education: the other was to be composed of drawers of water and cutters of turf for them. Are we to be astonished, when, by the efforts of so much violence in conquest, and so much policy in regulation, continued without intermission for near an hundred years, we had reduced them to a mob; that whenever they came to act at all, many of them would act exactly like a mob, without temper, measure, or foresight? Surely it might be just now a matter of temperate discussion, whether you ought not to apply a remedy to the real cause of the evil. If the disorder you speak of be real and considerable, you ought to raise an aristocratic interest; that is, an interest of property and education amongst them: and to strengthen by every prudent means, the authority and influence of men of that description. It will deserve your best thoughts, to examine whether this can be done without giving such persons the means of demonstrating to the rest, that something more is to be got by their temperate conduct, than can be be expected from the wild and senseless projects, of those, who do not belong to their body, who have no interest in their well-being, and only wish to make them the dupes of their turbulent ambition.

If the absurd persons you mention find no way of providing for liberty, but by overturning this happy constitution, and introducing a frantic democracy, let us take care how we prevent better people, from any rational expectations of par-

taking in the benefits of that constitution *as it stands*. The maxims you establish cut the matter short. They have no sort of connection with the good or the ill behavior of the persons who seek relief, or with the proper or improper means by which they seek it. They form a perpetual bar to all pleas and to all expectations.

You begin by asserting, that "the catholics ought to enjoy all things *under* the state, but that they ought not to *be the state*." A position which, I believe, in the latter part of it, and in the latitude there expressed, no man of common sense has ever thought proper to dispute: because the contrary implies, that the state ought to be in them *exclusively*. But before you have finished the line, you express yourself as if the other member of your proposition, namely, that "they ought not to be a *part* of the state," were necessarily included in the first—whereas I conceive it to be as different, as a part is from the whole; that is, just as different as possible. I know indeed, that it is common with those who talk very differently from you, that is, with heat and animosity, to confound those things, and to argue the admission of the catholics into any, however minute and subordinate, parts of the state, as a surrender into their hands of the whole government of the kingdom. To them I have nothing at all to say.

Wishing to proceed with a deliberative spirit and temper in so very serious a question, I shall attempt to analyze, as well as I can, the principles you lay down, in order to fit them for the grasp of an understanding so little comprehensive as mine—"State"—"Protestant"—"Revolution." These are terms, which, if not well explained, may lead us into many errors. In the word *State*, I conceive there is much ambiguity. The state is sometimes used to signify *the whole commonwealth*, comprehending all its orders, with the several privileges belonging to each. Sometimes it signifies only *the higher and ruling part* of the commonwealth; which we commonly call *the government*. In the first sense, to be under the state, but not the state itself, *nor any part of it*,

that is to be nothing at all in the commonwealth, is a situation perfectly intelligible: but to those who fill that situation, not very pleasant, when it is understood. It is a state of *civil servitude* by the very force of the definition. *Servorum non est respublica*, is a very old and a very true maxim. This servitude, which makes men *subject* to a state without being *citizens*, may be more or less tolerable from many circumstances: but these circumstances, more or less favorable, do not alter the nature of the thing. The mildness by which absolute masters exercise their dominion, leaves them masters still. We may talk a little presently of the manner in which the majority of the people of Ireland (the catholics) are affected by this situation; which at present undoubtedly is theirs, and which you are of opinion ought so to continue for ever.

In the other sense of the word *State*, by which is understood the *Supreme Government* only, I must observe this upon the question: that to exclude whole classes of men entirely from this *part* of government, cannot be considered as *absolute slavery*. It only implies a lower and degraded state of citizenship; such is (with more or less strictness) the condition of all countries, in which an hereditary nobility possess the exclusive rule. This may be no bad mode of government; provided that the personal authority of individual nobles be kept in due bounds, that their cabals and factions are guarded against with a severe vigilance, and that the people, (who have no share in granting their own money) are subjected to but light impositions, and are otherwise treated with attention, and with indulgence to their humors and prejudices.

The republic of Venice is one of those which strictly confines all the great functions and offices, such as are truly *state*-functions and *state*-offices, to those who, by hereditary right or admission, are noble Venetians. But there are many offices, and some of them not mean nor unprofitable, (that of chancellor is one) which are reserved for the *Cittadini*. Of these all citizens of Venice are capable. The inhabitants

of the *Terra firma*, who are mere subjects of conquest, that is, as you express it, under the state, but "not a part of it," are not, however, subjects in so very rigorous a sense as not to be capable of numberless subordinate employments. It is indeed one of the advantages attending the narrow bottom of their aristocracy (narrow as compared with their acquired dominions, otherwise broad enough, that an exclusion from such employments cannot possibly be made amongst their subjects. There are, besides, advantages in states so constituted, by which those who are considered as of an inferior race, are indemnified for their exclusion from the government and from nobler employments. In all these countries, either by express law, or by usage more operative, the noble casts are almost universally, in their turn, excluded from commerce, manufacture, farming of land, and in general from all lucrative civil professions. The nobles have the monopoly of honor. The plebeians a monopoly of all the means of acquiring wealth. Thus some sort of a balance is formed among conditions; a sort of compensation is furnished to those, who, in a *limited sense*, are excluded from the government of the state.

Between the extreme of *a total exclusion*, to which your maxim goes, and *an universal unmodified capacity*, to which the fanatics pretend, there are many different degrees and stages, and a great variety of temperaments, upon which prudence may give full scope to its exertions. For you know that the decisions of prudence (contrary to the system of the insane reasoners) differ from those of judicature: and that almost all the former are determined on the more or the less, the earlier or the later, and on a balance of advantage and inconvenience, of good and evil.

In all considerations which turn upon the question of vesting or continuing the state solely and exclusively in some one description of citizens; prudent legislators will consider, how far *the general form and principles of their commonwealth render it fit to be cast into an oligarchical shape, or to remain always in it.* We know that the government of

Ireland (the same as the British) is not in its constitution *wholly* aristocratical; and, as it is not such in its form, so neither is it in its spirit. If it had been inveterately aristocratical, exclusions might be more patiently submitted to. The lot of one plebeian would be the lot of all; and an habitual reverence and admiration of certain families, might make the people content to see government wholly in hands to whom it seemed naturally to belong. But our constitution has *a plebeian member*, which forms an essential integrant part of it. A plebeian oligarchy is a monster: and no people, not absolutely domestic or predial slaves, will long endure it. The protestants of Ireland are not *alone* sufficiently the people to form a democracy; and they are *too numerous* to answer the ends and purposes of *an aristocracy*. Admiration, that first source of obedience, can be only the claim or the imposture of a few. I hold it to be absolutely impossible for two millions of plebeians, composing certainly, a very clear and decided majority in that class, to become so far in love with six or seven hundred thousand of their fellow-citizens (to all outward appearance plebeians like themselves, and many of them tradesmen, servants, and otherwise inferior to some of them,) as to see with satisfaction, or even with patience, an exclusive power vested in them, by which *constitutionally* they become the absolute masters; and by the *manners* derived from their circumstances, must be capable of exercising upon them, daily and hourly, an insulting and vexatious superiority. Neither are the majority of the Irish indemnified (as in some aristocracies) for this state of humiliating vassalage (often inverting the nature of things and relations) by having the lower walks of industry wholly abandoned to them. They are rivaled, to say the least of the matter, in every laborious and lucrative course of life; while every franchise, every honor, every trust, every place down to the very lowest and least confidential (besides whole professions) is reserved for the master cast.

Our constitution is not made for great, general, and proscriptive exclusions; sooner or later it will destroy them, or

they will destroy the constitution. In our constitution there has always been a difference between *a franchise* and *an office*, and between the capacity for the one and for the other. Franchises were supposed to belong to the *subject*, as *a subject*, and not *as a member of the governing part of the state.* The policy of government has considered them as things very different: for whilst parliament excluded by the test acts (and for awhile these test acts were not a dead letter, as now they are in England,) protestant dissenters, from all civil and military employments, they *never touched their right of voting for members of parliament, or sitting in either house;* a point I state, not as approving or condemning, with regard to them, the measure of exclusion from employments, but to prove that the distinction has been admitted in legislature, as, in truth, it is founded in reason.

I will not here examine whether the principles of the British [the Irish] constitution, be wise or not. I must assume that they are; and that those who partake the franchises which make it, partake of a benefit. They who are excluded from votes (under proper qualifications inherent in the constitution that gives them) are excluded, not from the *state*, but from *the British constitution.* They cannot by any possibility, whilst they hear its praises continually rung in their ears, and are present at the declaration which is so generally and so bravely made by those who possess the privilege—that the best blood in their veins ought to be shed, to preserve their share in it; they, the disfranchised part, cannot, I say, think themselves in an *happy* state, to be utterly excluded from all its direct and all its consequential advantages. The popular part of the constitution must be to them, by far the most odious part of it. To them it is not *an actual*, and, if possible, still less a *virtual* representation. It is indeed the direct contrary. It is power unlimited, placed in the hands of *an adverse* description, *because, it is an adverse description.* And if they who compose the privileged body have not an interest, they must but too frequently have motives of pride, passion, petulance, peevish jealousy, or

tyrannic suspicion, to urge them to treat the excluded people with contempt and rigor.

This is not a mere theory; though whilst men are men, it is a theory that cannot be false. I do not desire to revive all the particulars in my memory; I wish them to sleep for ever; but it is impossible I should wholly forget what happened in some parts of Ireland, with very few and short intermissions, from the year 1761 to the year 1766, both inclusive. In a country of miserable police, passing from the extremes of laxity to the extremes of rigor, among a neglected, and therefore disorderly populace—if any disturbance or sedition, from any grievance real or imaginary, happened to arise, it was presently perverted from its true nature, often criminal enough in itself to draw upon it a severe appropriate punishment; it was metamorphosed into a conspiracy against the state, and prosecuted as such. Amongst the catholics, as being by far the most numerous and the most wretched, all sorts of offenders against the laws must commonly be found. The punishment of low people for the offences usual among low people, would warrant no inference against any descriptions of religion or of politics. Men of consideration from their age, their profession, or their character; men of proprietary landed estates, substantial renters, opulent merchants, physicians, and titular bishops, could not easily be suspected of riot in open day, or of nocturnal assemblies for the purpose of pulling down hedges, making breaches in park walls, firing barns, maiming cattle, and outrages of a similar nature, which characterize the disorders of an oppressed or a licentious populace. But when the evidence given on the trial for such misdemeanors, qualified them as overt acts of high treason, and when witnesses were found (such witnesses as they were) to depose to the taking of oaths of allegiance by the rioters to the king of France, to their being paid by his money, and embodied and exercised under his officers, to overturn the state for the purposes of that potentate; in that case, the rioters might (if the witness was believed) be supposed only the troops, and persons more

reputable, the leaders and commanders in such a rebellion. All classes in the obnoxious description, who could not be suspected in the lower crime of riot, might be involved in the odium, in the suspicion, and sometimes in the punishment of a higher and far more criminal species of offence. These proceedings did not arise from any one of the popery laws since repealed, but from this circumstance, that when it answered the purposes of an election party, or a malevolent person of influence to forge such plots, the people had no protection. The people of that description have no hold on the gentlemen who aspire to be popular representatives. The candidates neither love, nor respect, nor fear them, individually or collectively. I do not think this evil (an evil amongst a thousand others) at this day entirely over; for I conceive I have lately seen some indication of a disposition perfectly similar to the old one; that is, a disposition to carry the imputation of crimes from persons to descriptions, and wholly to alter the character and quality of the offences themselves.

This universal exclusion seems to me a serious evil—because many collateral oppressions, besides what I have just now stated, have arisen from it. In things of this nature, it would not be either easy or proper to quote chapter and verse; but I have great reason to believe, particularly since the octennial act, that several have refused at all to let their lands to Roman catholics; because it would so far disable them from promoting such interests in counties as they were inclined to favor. They who consider also the state of all sorts of tradesmen, shopkeepers, and particularly publicans in towns, must soon discern the disadvantages under which those labor who have no votes. It cannot be otherwise, whilst the spirit of elections, and the tendencies of human nature continue as they are. If property be artificially separated from franchise, the franchise must in some way or other, and in some proportion, naturally attract property to it. Many are the collateral disadvantages, amongst a *privileged* people, which must attend on those who have *no* privileges.

Among the rich each individual, with or without a franchise, is of importance; the poor and the middling are no otherwise so, than as they obtain some collective capacity, and can be aggregated to some corps. If legal ways are not found, illegal will be resorted to; and seditious clubs and confederacies, such as no man living holds in greater horror than I do, will grow and flourish, in spite, I am afraid, of any thing which can be done to prevent the evil. Lawful enjoyment is the surest method to prevent unlawful gratification. Where there is property, there will be less theft; where there is marriage, there will always be less fornication.

I have said enough of the question of state, *as it affects the people, merely as such.* But it is complicated with a political question relative to religion, to which it is very necessary I should say something; because the term *Protestant*, which you apply, is too general for the conclusions which one of your accurate understanding would wish to draw from it; and because a great deal of argument will depend on the use that is made of that term.

It is *not* a fundamental part of the settlement at the revolution, that the state should be protestant without *any qualification of the term.* With a qualification it is unquestionably true; not in all its latitude. With the qualification, it was true before the revolution. Our predecessors in legislation were not so irrational (not to say impious) as to form an operose ecclesiastical establishment, and even to render the state itself in some degree subservient to it, when their religion, (if such it might be called) was nothing but a mere *negation* of some other—without any positive idea either of doctrine, discipline, worship, or morals, in the scheme which they professed themselves, and which they imposed upon others, even under penalties and incapacities—No! No! This never could have been done even by reasonable atheists. They who think religion of no importance to the state have abandoned it to the conscience, or caprice, of the individual; they make no provision for it whatsoever, but leave

every club to make, or not, a voluntary contribution towards its support, according to their fancies. This would be consistent. The other always appeared to me to be a monster of contradiction and absurdity. It was for that reason, that some years ago I strenuously opposed the clergy who petitioned, to the number of about three hundred, to be freed from the subscription to the thirty-nine articles, without proposing to substitute any other in their place. There never has been a religion of the state (the few years of the parliament only excepted) but that of *the episcopal church of England;* the episcopal church of England, before the reformation, connected with the see of Rome, since then, disconnected and protesting against some of her doctrines, and against the whole of her authority, as binding in our national church: nor did the fundamental laws of this kingdom (in Ireland it has been the same) ever know, at any period, any other church *as an object of establishment;* or in that light, any other protestant religion. Nay our protestant *toleration* itself at the revolution, and until within a few years, required a signature of thirty-six, and a part of the thirty-seventh, out of the thirty-nine articles. So little idea had they at the revolution of *establishing* protestantism indefinitely, that they did not indefinitely *tolerate* it under that name. I do not mean to praise that strictness, where nothing more than merely religious toleration is concerned. Toleration being a part of moral and political prudence, ought to be tender and large. A tolerant government ought not to be too scrupulous in its investigations; but may bear without blame, not only very ill-grounded doctrines, but even many things that are positively vices, where they are *adulta et prævalida.* The good of the commonwealth is the rule which rides over the rest; and to this every other must completely submit.

The church of Scotland knows as little of protestantism *undefined*, as the church of England and Ireland do. She has by the articles of union secured to herself the perpetual establishment of *the Confession of Faith*, and the *presbyterian* church government. In England, even during the

troubled interregnum, it was not thought fit to establish a *negative* religion; but the parliament settled the *presbyterian*, as the church *discipline;* the *Directory*, as the rule of public *worship;* and the *Westminster catechism*, as the institute of *faith*. This is to shew, that at no time was the protestant religion *undefined*, established here, or any where else, as I believe. I am sure that when the three religions were established in Germany, they were expressly characterized and declared to be the *Evangelic*, the *Reformed*, and the *Catholic;* each of which has its confession of faith, and its settled discipline; so that you always may know the best and the worst of them, to enable you to make the most of what is good, and to correct or to qualify, or to guard against whatever may seem evil or dangerous. As to the coronation oath, to which you allude, as opposite to admitting a Roman catholic to the use of any franchise whatsoever, I cannot think that the king would be perjured if he gave his assent to any regulation which parliament might think fit to make, with regard to that affair. The king is bound by law, as clearly specified in several acts of parliament, to be in communion with the church of England. It is a part of the tenure by which he holds his crown; and though no provision was made till the revolution, which could be called positive and valid in law, to ascertain this great principle; I have always considered it as in fact fundamental, that the king of England should be of the christian religion, according to the national legal church for the time being. I conceive it was so before the reformation. Since the reformation it became doubly necessary; because the king is the head of that church; in some sort an ecclesiastical person; and it would be incongruous and absurd, to have the head of the church of one faith, and the members of another. The king may *inherit* the crown as a *protestant*, but he cannot *hold it* according to law, without being a protestant *of the church of England*.

Before we take it for granted, that the king is bound by his coronation oath, not to admit any of his catholic subjects to the rights and liberties, which ought to belong to them as

Englishmen (not as religionists) or to settle the conditions or proportions of such admission by an act of parliament, I wish you to place before your eyes that oath itself, as it is settled in the act of William and Mary.

"Will you to the utmost of your power maintain—The laws[1] of God, the true profession[2] of the[3] gospel—and the protestant[4] reformed religion *as it is established by law*.—And will you preserve[5] unto *bishops* and clergy, and the churches committed to *their* charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do, or shall appertain to them, or any of them.—All this I promise to do."

Here are the coronation engagements of the king. In them I do not find one word to preclude his majesty from consenting to any arrangement which parliament may make with regard to the civil privileges of any part of his subjects.

It may not be amiss, on account of the light which it will throw on this discussion, to look a little more narrowly into the matter of that oath—in order to discover how far it has hitherto operated, or how far in future it ought to operate, as a bar to any proceedings of the crown and parliament in favor of those, against whom it may be supposed that the king has engaged to support the protestant church of England, in the two kingdoms, in which it is established by law. First, the king swears he will maintain to the utmost of his power, "the laws of God." I suppose it means the natural moral laws. Secondly, he swears to maintain "the true profession of the gospel." By which I suppose is understood *affirmatively* the christian religion. Thirdly, that he will maintain "the protestant reformed religion." This leaves me no power of supposition or conjecture; for that protestant reformed religion is defined and described by the subsequent words, "established by law," and in this instance to define it beyond all possibility of doubt, he "swears to maintain the bishops and clergy, and the churches committed to their charge," in their rights present and future.

The oath as effectually prevents the king from doing any thing to the prejudice of the church in favor of sectaries, Jews, Mahometans, or plain avowed infidels; as if he should do the same thing in favor of the catholics. You will see, that it is the same protestant church so described, that the king is to maintain and communicate with, according to the act of settlement of the 12th and 13th of William III. The act of the 5th of Anne, made in prospect of the union, is entitled, "An act for securing the church of England as by law established." It meant to guard the church implicitly against any other mode of protestant religion which might creep in by means of the union. It proves beyond all doubt, that the legislature did not mean to guard the church on one part only, and to leave it defenceless and exposed upon every other. This church, in that act, is declared to be "fundamental and essential" for ever, in the constitution of the united kingdom, so far as England is concerned; and I suppose as the law stands, even since the independence, it is so in Ireland.

All this shews, that the religion which the king is bound to maintain, has a positive part in it as well as a negative; and that the positive part of it (in which we are in perfect agreement with the catholics and with the church of Scotland) is infinitely the most valuable and essential. Such an agreement we had with protestant dissenters in England, of those descriptions who came under the toleration act of king William and queen Mary; an act coeval with the revolution; and which ought, on the principles of the gentlemen who oppose the relief to the catholics, to have been held sacred and unalterable. Whether we agree with the present protestant dissenters in the points at the revolution held essential and fundamental among christians, or in any other fundamental, at present it is impossible for us to know; because, at their own very earnest desire, we have repealed the toleration act of William and Mary, and discharged them from the signature required by that act; and because, for the far greater part, they publicly declare against all manner of confessions of faith, even the *consensus*.

For reasons forcible enough at all times, but at this time particularly forcible with me, I dwell a little the longer upon this matter, and take the more pains, to put us both in mind that it was not settled at the revolution, that the state should be protestant, in the latitude of the term, but in a defined and limited sense only, and that in that sense only, the king is sworn to maintain it. To suppose that the king has sworn with his utmost power to maintain what it is wholly out of his power to discover, or which, if he could discover, he might discover to consist of things directly contradictory to each other, some of them perhaps impious, blasphemous, and seditious upon principle, would be not only a gross, but a most mischievous absurdity. If mere dissent from the church of Rome be a merit, he that dissents the most perfectly is the most meritorious. In many points we hold strongly with that church. He that dissents throughout with that church will dissent with the church of England, and then it will be a part of his merit that he dissents with ourselves:—a whimsical species of merit for any set of men to establish. We quarrel to extremity with those, who we know agree with us in many things, but we are to be so malicious even in the principle of our friendships, that we are to cherish in our bosom those who accord with us in nothing, because whilst they despise ourselves, they abhor even more than we do, those with whom we have some disagreement. A man is certainly the most perfect protestant, who protests against the whole christian religion. Whether a person's having no christian religion be a title to favor, in exclusion to the largest description of christians who hold all the doctrines of christianity, though holding along with them some errors and some superfluities, is rather more than any man who has not become recreant and apostate from his baptism, will, I believe choose to affirm. The countenance given from a spirit of controversy to that negative religion, may, by degrees, encourage light and unthinking people to a total indifference to every thing positive in matters of doctrine; and, in the end, of practice too. If continued, it would play the game of that sort of active, pro-

selytizing, and persecuting atheism, which is the disgrace and calamity of our time, and which we see to be as capable of subverting a government, as any mode can be, of misguided zeal for better things.

Now let us fairly see what course has been taken relative to those, against whom, in part at least the king has sworn to maintain a church, *positive in its doctrine and its discipline.* The first thing done, even when the oath was fresh in the mouth of the sovereigns, was to give a toleration to protestant dissenters, *whose doctrines they ascertained.* As to the mere civil privileges which the dissenters held as subjects before the revolution, these were not touched at all. The laws have fully permitted, in a qualification for all offices, to such dissenters, *an occasional conformity;* a thing I believe singular, where tests are admitted. The act called the Test Act itself, is, with regard to them, grown to be hardly any thing more than a dead letter. Whenever the dissenters cease by their conduct to give any alarm to the government, in church and state, I think it very probable that even this matter, rather disgustful than inconvenient to them, may be removed, or at least so modified as to distinguish the qualification to those offices which really *guide the state*, from those which are *merely instrumental;* or that some other and better tests may be put in their place.

So far as to England. In Ireland you have outran us. Without waiting for an English example, you have totally, and without any modification whatsover, repealed the test as to protestant dissenters. Not having the repealing act by me, I ought not to say positively that there is no exception in it; but if it be what I suppose it is, you know very well, that a Jew in religion, or a Mahometan, or even *a public, declared atheist*, and blasphemer, is perfectly qualified to be lord lieutenant, a lord justice, or even keeper of the king's conscience; and by virtue of his office (if with you it be as it is with us) administrator to a great part of the ecclesiastical patronage of the crown.

Now let us deal a little fairly. We must admit, that pro-

testant dissent was one of the quarters from which danger was apprehended at the revolution, and against which a part of the coronation oath was peculiarly directed. By this unqualified repeal, you certainly did not mean to deny that it was the duty of the crown to preserve the church against protestant dissenters; or taking this to be the true sense of the two revolution acts of king William, and of the previous and subsequent union acts of queen Anne, you did not declare by this most unqualified repeal, by which you broke down all the barriers, not invented, indeed, but carefully preserved at the revolution; you did not then and by that proceeding declare, that you had advised the king to perjury towards God, and perfidy towards the church. No! far, very far from it! you never would have done it, if you did not think it could be done with perfect repose to the royal conscience, and perfect safety to the national established religion. You did this upon a full consideration of the circumstances of your country. Now if circumstances required it, why should it be contrary to the king's oath, his parliament judging on those circumstances, to restore to his catholic people, in such measure, and with such modifications, as the public wisdom shall think proper to add, *some part* in these franchises which they formerly had held without any limitation at all, and which, upon no sort of urgent reason at the time, they were deprived of? If such means can with any probability be shewn, from circumstances, rather to add strength to our mixed ecclesiastical and secular constitution, than to weaken it; surely they are means infinitely to be preferred to penalties, incapacities, and proscriptions continued from generation to generation. They are perfectly consistent with the other parts of the coronation oath, in which the king swears to maintain "the laws of God and the true profession of the gospel, and to govern the people according to the statutes in parliament agreed upon, and the laws and customs of the realm." In consenting to such a statute, the crown would act at least as agreeable to the laws of God, and to the true profession of the gospel, and to the laws and customs of the

kingdom, as George I. did when he passed the statute which took from the body of the people, every thing, which, to that hour, and even after the monstrous acts, of the 2d and 8th of Anne, (the objects of our common hatred) they still enjoyed inviolate.

It is hard to distinguish with the least degree of accuracy, what laws are fundamental, and what not. However there is a distinction between them authorized by the writers on jurisprudence, and recognised in some of our statutes. I admit the acts of king William and queen Anne to be fundamental, but they are not the only fundamental laws. The law called *Magna Charta*, by which it is provided, that "no man shall be disseized of his liberties and free customs but by the judgment of his peers, or the laws of the land," (meaning clearly for some proved crime tried and adjudged) I take to be a *fundamental law*. Now, although this magna charta, or some of the statutes establishing it, provide that that law shall be perpetual, and all statutes contrary to it shall be void, yet I cannot go so far as to deny the authority of statutes made in defiance of magna charta and all its principles. This however I will say, that it is a very venerable law, made by very wise and learned men, and that the legislature, in their attempt to perpetuate it, even against the authority of future parliaments, have shewn their judgment that it is *fundamental*, on the same grounds, and in the same manner that the act of the 5th of Anne has considered, and declared the establishment of the church of England to be fundamental. Magna charta, which secured these franchises to the subjects, regarded the rights of freeholders in counties to be as much a fundamental part of the constitution, as the establishment of the church of England was thought either at that time, or in the act of king William, or in the act of queen Anne.

The churchmen, who led in that transaction, certainly took care of the material interest of which they were the natural guardians. It is the first article of magna charta, "that the church of England shall be free, &c. &c. But at that period churchmen, and barons, and knights, took care of the fran-

chises and free customs of the people too. Those franchises are part of the constitution itself, and inseparable from it. It would be a very strange thing if there should not only exist anomalies in our laws, a thing not easy to prevent, but, that the fundamental parts of the constitution should be perpetually and irreconcilably at variance with each other. I cannot persuade myself that the lovers of our church are not as able to find effectual ways of reconciling its safety with the franchises of the people, as the ecclesiastics of the thirteenth century were able to do; I cannot conceive how any thing worse can be said of the protestant religion of the church of England than this, that wherever it is judged proper to give it a legal establishment, it becomes necessary to deprive the body of the people, if they adhere to their old opinions, of "their liberties and of all their free customs," and to reduce them to a state of *civil* servitude.

There is no man on earth, I believe, more willing than I am, to lay it down as a fundamental of the constitution, that the church of England should be united and even identified with it: but allowing this, I cannot allow that all *laws of regulation*, made from time to time, in support of that fundamental law, are, of course, equally fundamental and equally unchangeable. This would be to confound all the branches of legislation and of jurisprudence. The *crown* and the personal safety of the monarch are *fundamentals* in our constitution: yet, I hope that no man regrets, that the rabble of statutes got together during the reign of Henry the Eighth, by which treasons are multiplied with so prolific an energy, have been all repealed in a body; although they were all, or most of them, made in support of things truly fundamental in our constitution. So were several of the acts by which the crown exercised its supremacy; such as the act of Elizabeth for making the *high commissioned courts*, and the like; as well as things made treason in the time of Charles II. None of this species of *secondary and subsidiary laws* have been held fundamental. They have yielded to circumstances: particularly where they were thought, even in their conse-

quences, or obliquely, to affect other fundamentals. How much more, certainly, ought they to give way, when, as in our case, they affect, not here and there, in some particular point, or in their consequence, but universally, collectively, and directly, the fundamental franchises of a people, equal to the whole inhabitants of several respectable kingdoms and states; equal to the subjects of the kings of Sardinia or of Denmark; equal to those of the United Netherlands; and more than are to be found in all the states of Switzerland. This way of proscribing men by whole nations, as it were, from all the benefits of the constitution to which they were born, I never can believe to be politic or expedient, much less necessary for the existence of any state or church in the world. Whenever I shall be convinced, which will be late and reluctantly, that the safety of the church is utterly inconsistent with all the civil rights whatsoever of the far larger part of the inhabitants of our country, I shall be extremely sorry for it; because I shall think the church to be truly in danger. It is putting things into the position of an ugly alternative, into which I hope in God they never will be put.

I have said most of what occurs to me on the topics you touch upon, relative to the religion of the king, and his coronation oath. I shall conclude the observations which I wished to submit to you on this point, by assuring you, that I think you the most remote that can be conceived from the metaphysicians of our times, who are the most foolish of men, and who, dealing in universals and essences, see no difference between more and less; and who of course would think that the reason of the law which obliged the king to be a communicant of the church of England, would be as valid to exclude a catholic from being an exciseman, or to deprive a man who has five hundred a year, under that description, from voting on a par with a factitious protestant dissenting freeholder of forty shillings.

Recollect, my dear friend, that it was a fundamental principle in the French monarchy, whilst it stood, that the state

should be catholic; yet the edict of Nantz gave, not a full ecclesiastical, but a complete civil *establishment*, with places of which only they were capable, to the calvinists of France; and there were very few employments indeed of which they were not capable. The world praised the cardinal de Richelieu, who took the first opportunity to strip them of their fortified places and cautionary towns. The same world held and does hold in execration (so far as that business is concerned) the memory of Louis the Fourteenth, for the total repeal of that favorable edict; though the talk of "fundamental laws, established religion, religion of the prince, safety to the state," &c. &c. was then as largely held, and with as bitter a revival of the animosities of the civil confusions during the struggles between the parties, as now they can be in Ireland.

Perhaps there are persons who think that the same reason does not hold when the religious relation of the sovereign and subject is changed; but they who have their shop full of false weights and measures, and who imagine that the adding or taking away the name of protestant or papist, Guelph or Ghibelline, alters all the principles of equity, policy, and prudence, leave us no common data upon which we can reason. I therefore pass by all this, which on you will make no impression, to come to what seems to be a serious consideration in your mind; I mean the dread you express of "reviewing, for the purpose of altering, *the principles of the revolution.*" This is an interesting topic; on which I will, as fully as your leisure and mine permits, lay before you the ideas I have formed.

First, I cannot possibly confound in my mind all the things which were done at the revolution, with the *principles* of the revolution. As in most great changes, many things were done from the necessities of the time, well or ill understood, from passion or from vengeance, which were not only, not perfectly agreeable to its principles, but in the most direct contradiction to them. I shall not think that the *deprivation of some millions of people of all the rights of citizens, and all interest in*

the constitution, in and to which they were born, was a thing conformable to the *declared principles* of the revolution. This I am sure is true relatively to England (where the operation of these *anti-principles* comparatively were of little extent) and some of our late laws, in repealing acts made immediately after the revolution, admit that some things then done were not done in the true spirit of the revolution. But the revolution operated differently in England and Ireland, in many, and these essential particulars. Supposing the principles to have been altogether the same in both kingdoms, by the application of those principles to very different objects, the whole spirit of the system was changed, not to say reversed. In England it was the struggle of the *great body* of the people for the establishment of their liberties, against the efforts of a very *small faction*, who would have oppressed them. In Ireland, it was the establishment of the power of the smaller number, at the expense of the civil liberties and properties of the far greater part; and at the expense of the political liberties of the whole. It was, to say the truth, not a revolution, but a conquest; which is not to say a great deal in its favor. To insist on every thing done in Ireland at the revolution, would be to insist on the severe and jealous policy of a conqueror, in the crude settlement of his new acquisition, as a *permanent* rule for its future government. This, no power, in no country that ever I heard of, has done or professed to do—except in Ireland; where it is done, and possibly by some people will be professed. Time has, by degrees, in all other places and periods, blended and coalited the conquered with the conquerors. So, after some time, and after one of the most rigid conquests that we read of in history, the Normans softened into the English. I wish you to turn your recollection to the fine speech of Cerealis to the Gauls, made to dissuade them from revolt. Speaking of the Romans,—"*Nos* quamvis toties lacessiti, jure victoriæ id solum vobis addidimus, quo pacem tueremur; nam neque quies gentium sine armis; neque arma sine stipendiis; neque stipendia sine tributis, haberi queant. *Cætera*

in communi sita sunt: ipsi plerumque nostris exercitibus *præsidetis:* ipsi has aliasque provincias *regitas: nil seperatum clausumve*—Proinde pacem et urbem, quam *victores victique eodem jure obtinemus*, amate, colite." You will consider, whether the arguments used by that Roman to these Gauls, would apply to the case in Ireland; and whether you could use so plausible a preamble to any severe warning you might think it proper to hold out to those who should resort to sedition instead of supplication, to obtain any object that they may pursue with the governing power.

For a much longer period than that which had sufficed to blend the Romans with the nation to which of all others they were the most adverse, the protestants settled in Ireland, considered themselves in no other light than that of a sort of a colonial garrison, to keep the natives in subjection to the other state of Great Britain. The whole spirit of the revolution in Ireland, was that of not the mildest conqueror. In truth, the spirit of those proceedings did not commence at that era, nor was religion of any kind their primary object. What was done, was not in the spirit of a contest between two religious factions; but between two adverse nations. The statutes of Kilkenny shew, that the spirit of the popery laws, and some even of their actual provisions, as applied between Englishry and Irishry, had existed in that harassed country before the words protestant and papist were heard of in the world. If we read baron Finglas, Spenser, and Sir John Davis, we cannot miss the true genius and policy of the English government there before the revolution, as well as during the whole reign of queen Elizabeth. Sir John Davis boasts of the benefits received by the natives, by extending to them the English law, and turning the whole kingdom into shire ground. But the appearance of things alone was changed. The original scheme was never deviated from for a single hour. Unheard of confiscations were made in the northern parts, upon grounds of plots and conspiracies, never proved upon their supposed authors. The war of chicane succeeded to the war of arms and of hostile statutes; and a regular series of opera-

tions was carried on, particularly from Chichester's time, in the ordinary courts of justice, and by special commissions and inquisitions; first, under pretence of tenures, and then of titles in the crown, for the purpose of the total extirpation of the interest of the natives in their own soil—until this species of subtle ravage, being carried to the last excess of oppression and insolence under lord Strafford, it kindled the flames of that rebellion which broke out in 1641. By the issue of that war, by the turn which the earl of Clarendon gave to things at the restoration, and by the total reduction of the kingdom of Ireland in 1691, the ruin of the native Irish, and in a great measure too of the first races of the English, was completely accomplished. The new English interest was settled with as solid a stability as any thing in human affairs can look for. All the penal laws of that unparalleled code of oppression, which were made after the last event, were manifestly the effects of national hatred and scorn towards a conquered people; whom the victors delighted to trample upon, and were not at all afraid to provoke. They were not the effect of their fears but of their security. They who carried on this system, looked to the irresistible force of Great Britain for their support in their acts of power. They were quite certain, that no complaints of the natives would be heard on this side of the water, with any other sentiments than those of contempt and indignation. Their cries served only to augment their torture. Machines, which could answer their purposes so well, must be of an excellent contrivance. Indeed in England, the double name of the complainants, Irish and Papists (it would be hard to say, which singly was the most odious,) shut up the hearts of every one against them. Whilst that temper prevailed, and it prevailed in all its force to a time within our memory, every measure was pleasing and popular, just in proportion as it tended to harass and ruin a set of people, who were looked upon as enemies to God and man; and indeed as a race of bigoted savages who were a disgrace to human nature itself.

However, as the English in Ireland began to be domicil-

iated, they began also to recollect that they had a country. The *English interest*, at first by faint and almost insensible degrees, but at length openly and avowedly became an *independent Irish interest;* full as independent as it could ever have been, if it had continued in the persons of the native Irish; and it was maintained with more skill, and more consistency than probably it would have been in theirs. With their views, the *Anglo-Irish* changed their maxims—it was necessary to demonstrate to the whole people, that there was something, at least, of a common interest, combined with the independency, which was to become the object of common exertions. The mildness of government produced the first relaxation towards the Irish; the necessities, and, in part too, the temper that predominated at this great change, produced the second and the most important of these relaxations. English government, and Irish legislature, felt jointly the propriety of this measure. The Irish parliament and nation became independent.

The true revolution to you, that which most intrinsically and substantially resembled the English revolution of 1688, was the Irish revolution of 1782. The Irish parliament of 1782 bore little resemblance to that which sat in that kingdom, after the period of the first of these revolutions. It bore a much nearer resemblance to that which sat under king James. The change of the parliament in 1782 from the character of the parliament which, as a token of its indignation, had burned all the journals indiscriminately of the former parliament in the council chamber, was very visible. The address of king William's parliament, the parliament which assembled after the revolution, amongst other causes of complaint (many of them sufficiently just) complains of the repeal by their predecessors of Poyning's law; no absolute idol with the parliament of 1782.

Great Britain, finding the Anglo-Irish highly animated with a spirit, which had indeed shewn itself before, though with little energy, and many interruptions, and therefore suffered a multitude of uniform precedents to be established against it,

acted, in my opinion, with the greatest temperance and wisdom. She saw that the disposition of the *leading part* of the nation would not permit them to act any longer the part of a *garrison*. She saw, that true policy did not require that they ever should have appeared in that character; or if it had done so formerly, the reasons had now ceased to operate. She saw that the Irish of her race, were resolved to build their constitution and their politics upon another bottom. With those things under her view, she instantly complied with the whole of your demands, without any reservation whatsoever. She surrendered that boundless superiority, for the preservation of which, and the acquisition, she had supported the English colonies in Ireland for so long a time, and so vast an expense (according to the standard of those ages) of her blood and treasure.

When we bring before us the matter which history affords for our selection, it is not improper to examine the spirit of the several precedents, which are candidates for our choice. Might it not be as well for your statesmen, on the other side of the water, to take an example from this latter, and surely more conciliatory revolution, as a pattern for your conduct towards your own fellow-citizens, than from that of 1688, when a paramount sovereignty over both you and them, was more loftily claimed, and more sternly exerted, than at any former, or at any subsequent period? Great Britain in 1782, rose above the vulgar ideas of policy, the ordinary jealousies of state, and all the sentiments of national pride and national ambition. If she had been more disposed than, I thank God for it she was, to listen to the suggestions of passion, than to the dictates of prudence; she might have urged the principles, the maxims, the policy, the practice of the revolution, against the demands of the leading description in Ireland, with full as much plausibility, and full as good a grace, as any amongst them can possibly do, against the supplications of so vast and extensive a description of their own people.

A good deal too, if the spirit of domination and exclusion

had prevailed in England, might have been excepted against some of the means then employed in Ireland, whilst her claims were in agitation. They were, at least, as much out of ordinary course, as those which are now objected against admitting your people to any of the benefits of an English constitution. Most certainly, neither with you, nor here, was any one ignorant of what was at that time said, written, and done. But on all sides we separated the means from the end: and we separated the cause of the moderate and rational, from the ill-intentioned and seditious; which on such occasions are so frequently apt to march together. At that time, on your part, you were not afraid to review what was done at the revolution of 1688; and what had been continued during the subsequent flourishing period of the British empire. The change then made was a great and fundamental alteration. In the execution, it was an operose business on both sides of the water. It required the repeal of several laws; the modification of many, and a new course to be given to an infinite number of legislative, judicial, and official practices and usages in both kingdoms. This did not frighten any of us. You are now asked to give, in some moderate measure, to your fellow-citizens, what Great Britain gave to you, without any measure at all. Yet, notwithstanding all the difficulties at the time, and the apprehensions which some very well meaning people entertained, through the admirable temper in which this revolution (or restoration in the nature of a revolution) was conducted in both kingdoms, it has hitherto produced no inconvenience to either; and I trust, with the continuance of the same temper, that it never will. I think that this small inconsiderable change (relative to an exclusive statute not made at the revolution) for restoring the people to the benefits, from which the green soreness of a civil war had not excluded them, will be productive of no sort of mischief whatsoever. Compare what was done in 1782, with what is wished in 1792; consider the spirit of what has been done at the several periods of reformation; and weigh maturely, whether it be exactly true that conciliatory concessions are of

good policy only in discussions between nations; but that among descriptions in the same nation, they must always be irrational and dangerous. What have you suffered in your peace, your prosperity, or, in what ought ever to be dear to a nation, your glory, by the last act by which you took the property of that people under the protection of the *laws?* What reason have you to dread the consequences of admitting the people possessing that property to some share in the protection of the *constitution?*

I do not mean to trouble you with any thing to remove the objections, I will not call them arguments, against this measure, taken from a ferocious hatred to all that numerous description of christians. It would be to pay a poor compliment to your understanding or your heart. Neither *your* religion, nor *your* politics consist "in odd perverse antipathies." You are not resolved to persevere in proscribing from the constitution, so many millions of your countrymen, because in contradiction to experience and to common sense, you think proper to imagine, that their principles are subversive of common human society. To that I shall only say, that whoever has a temper, which can be gratified by indulging himself in these good-natured fancies, ought to do a great deal more. For an exclusion from the privileges of British subjects, is not a cure for so terrible a distemper of the human mind, as they are pleased to suppose in their countrymen. I rather conceive a participation in those privileges to be in itself a remedy for some mental disorders.

As little shall I detain you with matters that can as little obtain admission into a mind like yours; such as the fear, or pretence of fear, that in spite of your own power, and the trifling power of Great Britain, you may be conquered by the pope; or that this commodious bugbear (who is of infinitely more use to those who pretend to fear, than to those who love him,) will absolve his majesty's subjects from their allegiance, and send over the cardinal of York to rule you as his viceroy; or that, by the plenitude of his power, he will take that fierce tyrant the king of the French, out of his jail,

and arm that nation (which on all occasions treats his holiness so very politely) with his bulls and pardons, to invade poor old Ireland, to reduce you to popery and slavery, and to force the freeborn, naked feet of your people into the wooden shoes of that arbitrary monarch. I do not believe that discourses of this kind are held, or any thing like them will be held, by any who walk about without a keeper. Yet, I confess, that on occasions of this nature, I am the most afraid of the weakest reasonings; because they discover the strongest passions. These things will never be brought out in definite propositions. They would not prevent pity towards any persons; they would only cause it for those who were capable of talking in such a strain. But I know, and am sure, that such ideas as no man will distinctly produce to another, or hardly venture to bring in any plain shape to his own mind—he will utter in obscure, ill-explained doubts, jealousies, surmises, fears, and apprehensions; and that, in such a fog, they will appear to have a good deal of size, and will make an impression; when, if they were clearly brought forth and defined, they would meet with nothing but scorn and derision.

There is another way of taking an objection to this concession, which I admit to be something more plausible, and worthy of a more attentive examination. It is, that this numerous class of people is mutinous, disorderly, prone to sedition, and easy to be wrought upon by the insidious arts of wicked and designing men; that conscious of this, the sober, rational and wealthy part of that body, who are totally of another character, do by no means desire any participation for themselves, or for any one else of their description, in the franchises of the British constitution.

I have great doubt of the exactness of any part of this observation. But let us admit that the body of the catholics are prone to sedition (of which, as I have said, I entertain much doubt,) is it possible that any fair observer or fair reasoner, can think of confining this description to them only? I believe it to be possible for men to be mutinous and seditious who feel no grievance: but I believe no man will assert

seriously, that when people are of a turbulent spirit, the best way to keep them in order, is to furnish them with something substantial to complain of.

You separate very properly the sober, rational, and substantial part of their description from the rest. You give, as you ought to do, weight only to the former. What I have always thought of the matter is this—that the most poor, illiterate, and uninformed creatures upon earth, are judges of a *practical* oppression. It is a matter of feeling; and as such persons generally have felt most of it, and are not of an overlively sensibility, they are the best judges of it. But for the *real cause*, or the *appropriate remedy*, they ought never to be called into council about the one or the other. They ought to be totally shut out; because their reason is weak; because when once roused, their passions are ungoverned; because they want information; because the smallness of the property which individually they possess, renders them less attentive to the consequence of the measures they adopt in affairs of moment. When I find a great cry amongst the people who speculate little, I think myself called seriously to examine into it, and to separate the real cause from the ill effects of the passion it may excite; and the bad use which artful men may make of an irritation of the popular mind. Here we must be aided by persons of a contrary character; we must not listen to the desperate or the furious; but it is therefore necessary for us to distinguish who are the *really* indigent, and the *really* intemperate. As to the persons who desire this part in the constitution, I have no reason to imagine that they are men who have nothing to lose and much to look for in public confusion. The popular meeting from which apprehensions have been entertained, has assembled. I have accidentally had conversation with two friends of mine, who know something of the gentleman who was put into the chair upon that occasion; one of them has had money transactions with him; the other, from curiosity has been to see his concerns; they both tell me he is a man of some property; but you must be the best judge of

this, who by your office are likely to know his transactions. Many of the others are certainly persons of fortune; and all or most, fathers of families, men in respectable ways of life, and some of them far from contemptible, either for their information, or for the abilities which they have shewn in the discussion of their interests. What such men think it for their advantage to acquire, ought not, *prima facie*, to be considered as rash or heady, or incompatible with the public safety or welfare.

I admit, that men of the best fortunes and reputations, and of the best talents and education too, may, by accident, shew themselves furious and intemperate in their desires. This is a great misfortune when it happens; for the first presumptions are undoubtedly in their favor. We have two standards of judging in this case of the sanity and sobriety of any proceedings; of unequal certainty indeed, but neither of them to be neglected: the first is by the value of the object sought, the next is by the means through which it is pursued.

The object pursued by the catholics is, I understand, and have all along reasoned as if it were so, in some degree or measure to be again admitted to the franchises of the constitution. Men are considered as under some derangement of their intellects, when they see good and evil in a different light from other men; when they choose nauseous and unwholesome food; and reject such as to the rest of the world seems pleasant, and is known to be nutritive. I have always considered the British constitution, not to be a thing in itself so vicious, as that none but men of deranged understanding, and turbulent tempers could desire a share in it: on the contrary, I should think very indifferently of the understanding and temper of any body of men, who did not wish to partake of this great and acknowledged benefit. I cannot think quite so favorably either of the sense or temper of those, if any such there are, who would voluntarily persuade their brethren that the object is not fit for them, or they for the object. Whatever may be my thoughts concerning them, I am quite sure, that they who hold such language must forfeit all credit with

the rest. This is infallible—if they conceive any opinion of their judgment, they cannot possibly think them their friends. There is, indeed, one supposition, which would reconcile the conduct of such gentlemen to sound reason, and to the purest affection towards their fellow-sufferers; it is, that they act under the impression of a well-grounded fear for the general interest. If they should be told, and should believe the story, that if they dare attempt to make their condition better, they will infallibly make it worse—that if they aim at obtaining liberty, they will have their slavery doubled—that their endeavor to put themselves upon any thing which approaches towards an equitable footing with their fellow-subjects, will be considered as an indication of a seditious and rebellious disposition—such a view of things ought perfectly to restore the gentlemen, who so anxiously dissuade their countrymen from wishing a participation with the privileged part of the people, to the good opinion of their fellows. But what is to *them* a very full justification, is not quite so honorable to that power from whose maxims and temper so good a ground of rational terror is furnished. I think arguments of this kind will never be used by the friends of a government which I greatly respect; or by any of the leaders of an opposition whom I have the honor to know, and the sense to admire. I remember Polybius tells us, that during his captivity in Italy as a Peloponnesian hostage—he solicited old Cato to intercede with the senate for his release, and that of his countrymen: this old politician told him that he had better continue in his present condition, however irksome, than apply again to that formidable authority for their relief; that he ought to imitate the wisdom of his countryman Ulysses, who, when he was once out of the den of the Cyclops, had too much sense to venture again into the same cavern. But I conceive too high an opinion of the Irish legislature to think that they are to their fellow-citizens, what the grand oppressors of mankind were to a people whom the fortune of war had subjected to their power. For though Cato could use such a parallel with regard to his senate, I should really think it nothing short of

impious, to compare an Irish parliament to a den of Cyclops. I hope the people, both here and with you, will always apply to the house of commons with becoming modesty; but at the same time with minds unembarrassed with any sort of terror.

As to the means which the catholics employ to obtain this object, so worthy of sober and rational minds. I do admit that such means may be used in the pursuit of it, as may make it proper for the legislature, in this case, to defer their compliance until the demandants are brought to a proper sense of their duty. A concession in which the governing power of our country loses its dignity, is dearly bought even by him who obtains his object. All the people have a deep interest in the dignity of parliament. But, as the refusal of franchises which are drawn out of the first vital stamina of the British constitution, is a very serious thing, we ought to be very sure, that the manner and spirit of the application is offensive and dangerous indeed, before we ultimately reject all applications of this nature. The mode of application, I hear, is by petition. It is the manner in which all the sovereign powers in the world are approached; and I never heard (except in the case of James the Second) that any prince considered this manner of supplication to be contrary to the humility of a subject, or to the respect due to the person or authority of the sovereign. This rule, and a correspondent practice, are observed, from the grand seignor, down to the most petty prince, or republic in Europe.

You have sent me several papers, some in print, some in manuscript. I think I had seen all of them, except the formula of association. I confess they appear to me to contain matter mischievous, and capable of giving alarm, if the spirit in which they are written should be found to make any considerable progress. But I am at a loss to know how to apply them, as objections to the case now before us. When I find that *the general committee* which acts for the Roman catholics in Dublin, prefers the association proposed in the written draft you have sent me, to a respectful application in parliament, I shall think the persons who sign such a pa-

per, to be unworthy of any privilege which may be thought fit to be granted; and that such men ought, *by name*, to be excepted from any benefit under the constitution, to which they offer this violence. But I do not find that this form of a seditious league has been signed by any person whatsoever, either on the part of the supposed projectors, or on the part of those whom it is calculated to seduce. I do not find, on inquiry, that such a thing was mentioned, or even remotely alluded to, in the general meeting of the catholics, from which so much violence was apprehended. I have considered the other publications, signed by individuals, on the part of certain societies—I may mistake, for I have not the honor of knowing them personally, but I take Mr. Butler and Mr. Tandy not to be catholics, but members of the established church. Not *one* that I recollect of these publications, which you and I equally dislike, appears to be written by persons of that persuasion. Now, if, whilst a man is dutifully soliciting a favor from parliament, any person should choose, in an improper manner, to shew his inclination towards the cause depending; and if that *must* destroy the cause of the petitioner; then, not only the petitioner, but the legislature itself, is in the power of any weak friend or artful enemy, that the supplicant, or that the parliament may have. A man must be judged by his own actions only. Certain protestant dissenters make seditious propositions to the catholics, which it does not appear that they have yet accepted. It would be strange that the tempter should escape all punishment, and that he who, under circumstances full of seduction and full of provocation, has resisted the temptation, should incur the penalty. You know, that, with regard to the dissenters, who are *stated* to be chief movers in this vile scheme of altering the principles of election to a right of voting by the head, you are not able (if you ought even to wish such a thing) to deprive them of any part of the franchises and privileges which they hold on a footing of perfect equality with yourselves. *They* may do what they please with constitutional impunity; but the others cannot even listen with civility to an invitation from them to

an ill-judged scheme of liberty, without forfeiting, for ever, all hopes of any of those liberties which we admit to be sober and rational.

It is known, I believe, that the greater, as well as the sounder part of our excluded countrymen, have not adopted the wild ideas, and wilder engagements, which have been held out to them; but have rather chosen to hope small and safe concessions from the legal power, than boundless objects from trouble and confusion. This mode of action seems to me to mark men of sobriety, and to distinguish them from those who are intemperate, from circumstance or from nature. But why do they not instantly disclaim and disavow those who make such advances to them? In this too, in my opinion, they shew themselves no less sober and circumspect. In the present moment, nothing short of insanity could induce them to take such a step. Pray consider the circumstances. Disclaim, says somebody, all union with the dissenters;—right—But, when this your injunction is obeyed, shall I obtain the object which I solicit from *you*?—Oh, no, nothing at all like it! But, in punishing us by an exclusion from the constitution through the great gate, for having been invited to enter into it by a postern, will you punish by deprivation of their privileges, or mulct in any other way, those who have tempted us?—Far from it—we mean to preserve all *their* liberties and immunities, as *our* life-blood. We mean to cultivate *them*, as brethren whom we love and respect—with *you* we have no fellowship. We can bear, with patience, their enmity to ourselves; but their friendship with you, we will not endure. But mark it well! All our quarrels with *them*, are always to be revenged upon you. Formerly, it is notorious, that we should have resented with the highest indignation, your presuming to shew any ill-will to them. You must not suffer them, now, to shew any good-will to you. Know—and take it once for all—that it is, and ever has been, and ever will be, a fundamental maxim in our politics, that you are not to have any part, or shadow, or name of interest whatever, in our state. That we look upon

you, as under an irreversible outlawry from our constitution—as perpetual and unalliable aliens.

Such, my dear sir, is the plain nature of the argument drawn from the revolution maxims, enforced by a supposed disposition in the catholics to unite with the dissenters. Such it is, though it were clothed in never such bland and civil forms, and wrapped up, as a poet says, in a thousand "artful folds of sacred lawn." For my own part, I do not know in what manner to shape such arguments, so as to obtain admission for them into a rational understanding. Every thing of this kind is to be reduced, at last, to threats of power. I cannot say *væ victis*, and then throw the sword into the scale. I have no sword; and if I had, in this case most certainly I would not use it as a make-weight in political reasoning.

Observe, on these principles, the difference between the procedure of the parliament and the dissenters, towards the people in question. One employs courtship, the other force. The dissenters offer bribes, the parliament nothing but the *front negatif* of a stern and forbidding authority. A man may be very wrong in his ideas of what is good for him. But no man affronts me, nor can therefore justify my affronting him, by offering to make me as happy as himself, according to his own ideas of happiness. This the dissenters do to the catholics. You are on the different extremes. The dissenters offer, with regard to constitutional rights and civil advantages of all sorts, *every thing*—you refuse *every thing*. With them, there is boundless, though not very assured hope; with you, a very sure and very unqualified despair. The terms of alliance, from the dissenters, offer a representation of the commons, chosen out of the people by the head. This is absurdly and dangerously large, in my opinion; and that scheme of election is known to have been, at all times, perfectly odious to me. But I cannot think it right of course, to punish the Irish Roman catholics by an universal exclusion, because others, whom you would not punish at all, propose an universal admission. I cannot dissemble to myself,

that, in this very kingdom, many persons who are not in the situation of the Irish catholics, but who, on the contrary, enjoy the full benefit of the constitution as it stands, and some of whom, from the effect of their fortunes, enjoy it in a large measure, had some years ago associated to procure great and undefined changes (they considered them as reforms) in the popular part of the constitution. Our friend, the late Mr. Flood (no slight man) proposed in his place, and in my hearing, a representation not much less extensive than this, for England; in which every house was to be inhabited by a voter—*in addition* to all the actual votes by other titles (some of the corporate) which we know do not require a house, or a shed. Can I forget that a person of the very highest rank, of very large fortune, and of the first class of ability, brought a bill into the house of lords, in the head-quarters of aristocracy, containing identically the same project, for the supposed adoption of which by a club or two, it is thought right to extinguish all hopes in the Roman catholics of Ireland? I cannot say it was very eagerly embraced, or very warmly pursued. But the lords neither did disavow the bill, nor treat it with any disregard, nor express any sort of disapprobation of its noble author, who has never lost, with king or people, the least degree of the respect and consideration which so justly belongs to him.

I am not at all enamored, as I have told you, with this plan of representation; as little do I relish any bandings or associations for procuring it. But if the question was to be put to you and me—*universal* popular representation, or *none at all for us and ours*—we should find ourselves in a very awkward position. I do not like this kind of dilemmas, especially when they are practical.

Then, since our oldest fundamental laws follow, or rather couple, freehold with franchise; since no principle of the revolution shakes these liberties; since the oldest and one of the best monuments of the constitution, demands for the Irish the privilege which they supplicate; since the principles of the revolution coincide with the declarations of the great

charter; since the practice of the revolution, in this point, did not contradict its principles; since, from that event, twenty-five years had elapsed, before a domineering party, on a party principle, had ventured to disfranchise, without any proof whatsoever of abuse, the greater part of the community; since the king's coronation oath does not stand in his way to the performance of his duty to all his subjects; since you have given to all other dissenters these privileges without limit, which are hitherto withheld without any limitation whatsoever, from the catholics; since no nation in the world has ever been known to exclude so great a body of men (not born slaves) from the civil state, and all the benefits of its constitution; the whole question comes before parliament, as a matter for its prudence. I do not put the thing on a question of right. That discretion which in judicature is well said by lord Coke to be a crooked cord, in legislature is a golden rule. Supplicants ought not to appear too much in the character of litigants. If the subject thinks so highly and reverently of the sovereign authority, as not to claim any thing of right, so that it may seem to be independent of the power and free choice of its government; and if the sovereign, on his part, considers the advantages of the subjects as their right, and all their reasonable wishes as so many claims; in the fortunate conjunction of these mutual dispositions are laid the foundations of a happy and prosperous commonwealth. For my own part, desiring of all things that the authority of the legislature under which I was born, and which I cherish, not only with a dutiful awe, but with a partial and cordial affection, to be maintained in the utmost possible respect, I never will suffer myself to suppose, that, at bottom, their discretion will be found to be at variance with their justice.

The whole being at discretion, I beg leave just to suggest some matters for your consideration—Whether the government in church or state is likely to be more secure by continuing causes of grounded discontent, to a very great number (say two millions) of the subjects? or, Whether the con-

stitution, combined and balanced as it is, will be rendered more solid, by depriving so large a part of the people of all concern, or interest, or share, in its representation, actual or *virtual?* I here mean to lay an emphasis on the word *virtual.* Virtual representation is that in which there is a communion of interest, and a sympathy in feelings and desires between those who act in the name of any description of people, and the people in whose name they act, though the trustees are not actually chosen by them. This is virtual representation. Such a representation I think to be, in many cases, even better than the actual. It possesses most of its advantages, and is free from many of its inconveniences; it corrects the irregularities in the literal representation, when the shifting current of human affairs, or the acting of public interests in different ways, carry it obliquely from its first line of direction. The people may err in their choice; but common interest and common sentiment are rarely mistaken. But this sort of virtual representation cannot have a long or sure existence, if it has not a substratum in the actual. The member must have some relation to the constituent. As things stand, the catholic, as a catholic and belonging to a description, has no *virtual* relation to the representative; but the *contrary.* There is a relation in mutual obligation. Gratitude may not always have a very lasting power; but the frequent recurrence of an application for favors will revive and refresh it, and will necessarily produce some degree of mutual attention. It will produce, at least, acquaintance. The several descriptions of people will not be kept so much apart as they now are, as if they were not only separate nations, but separate species. The stigma and reproach, the hideous mask will be taken off, and men will see each other as they are. Sure I am, that there have been thousands in Ireland, who have never conversed with a Roman catholic in their whole lives, unless they happened to talk to their gardener's workmen, or to ask their way, when they had lost it, in their sports; or, at best, who had known them only as footmen, or other domestics, of the second and third order; and

so averse were they, some time ago, to have them near their persons, that they would not employ even those who could never find their way beyond the stable. I well remember a great, and in many respects a good man, who advertised for a blacksmith; but, at the same time, added, he must be a protestant. It is impossible that such a state of things, though natural goodness in many persons will undoubtedly make exceptions, must not produce alienation on the one side, and pride and insolence on the other.

Reduced to a question of discretion, and that discretion exercised solely upon what will appear best for the conservation of the state on its present basis, I should recommend it to your serious thoughts, whether the narrowing of the foundation is always the best way to secure the building? The body of disfranchised men will not be perfectly satisfied to remain always in that state. If they are not satisfied, you have two millions of subjects in your bosom, full of uneasiness; not that they cannot overturn the act of settlement, and put themselves and you under an arbitrary master; or, that they are not permitted to spawn a hydra of wild republics, on principles of a pretended natural equality in man; but, because you will not suffer them to enjoy the ancient, fundamental, tried advantages of a British constitution: that you will not permit them to profit of the protection of a common father, or the freedom of common citizens: and that the only reason, which can be assigned for this disfranchisement, has a tendency more deeply to ulcerate their minds than the act of exclusion itself. What the consequence of such feelings must be, it is for you to look to. To warn, is not to menace.

I am far from asserting, that men will not excite disturbances without just cause. I know that such an assertion is not true. But, neither is it true that disturbances have never just complaints for their origin. I am sure that it is hardly prudent to furnish them with such causes of complaint, as every man who thinks the British constitution a benefit, may think, at least colorable and plausible.

Several are in dread of the manœuvres of certain persons

among the dissenters, who turn this ill humor to their own ill purposes. You know, better than I can, how much these proceedings of certain persons among the dissenters are to be feared. You are to weigh, with the temper which is natural to you, whether it may be for the safety of our establishment, that the catholics should be ultimately persuaded that they have no hope to enter into the constitution, but through the dissenters.

Think, whether this be the way to prevent, or dissolve factious combinations against the church, or the state. Reflect seriously on the possible consequences of keeping, in the heart of your country, a bank of discontent, every hour accumulating, upon which every description of seditious men may draw at pleasure. They, whose principles of faction will dispose them to the establishment of an arbitrary monarchy, will find a nation of men who have no sort of interest in freedom; but who will have an interest in that equality of justice or favor, with which a wise despot must view all his subjects who do not attack the foundations of his power. Love of liberty itself may, in such men, become the means of establishing an arbitrary domination. On the other hand, they who wish for a democratic republic, will find a set of men who have no choice between civil servitude, and the entire ruin of a mixed constitution.

Suppose the people of Ireland divided into three parts; of these (I speak within compass) two are catholic. Of the remaining third, one half is composed of dissenters. There is no natural union between those descriptions. It may be produced. If the two parts catholic be driven into a close confederacy with half the third part of protestants, with a view to a change in the constitution in church or state, or both; and you rest the whole of their security on a handful of gentlemen, clergy, and their dependants; compute the strength *you have in Ireland*, to oppose to grounded discontent; to capricious innovation; to blind popular fury, and to ambitious turbulent intrigue.

You mention that the minds of some gentlemen are a good

deal heated: and that it is often said, that, rather than submit to such persons having a share in their franchises, they would throw up their independence, and precipitate an union with Great Britain. I have heard a discussion concerning such an union amongst all sorts of men ever since I remember any thing. For my own part, I have never been able to bring my mind to any thing clear and decisive upon the subject. There cannot be a more arduous question. As far as I can form an opinion, it would not be for the mutual advantage of the two kingdoms. Persons, however, more able than I am, think otherwise. But, whatever the merits of this union may be, to make it a *menace*, it must be shewn to be an *evil;* and an evil more particularly to those who are threatened with it, than to those who hold it out as a terror. I really do not see how this threat of an union can operate, or that the catholics are more likely to be losers by that measure than the churchmen.

The humors of the people, and of politicians too, are so variable in themselves, and are so much under the occasional influence of some leading men, that it is impossible to know what turn the public mind here would take on such an event. There is but one thing certain concerning it. Great divisions and vehement passions would precede this union, both on the measure itself and on its terms; and particularly, this very question of a share in the representation for the catholics, from whence the project of an union originated, would form a principal part in the discussion; and in the temper in which some gentlemen seem inclined to throw themselves, by a sort of high indignant passion, into the scheme, those points would not be deliberated with all possible calmness.

From my best observation, I should greatly doubt, whether, in the end, these gentlemen would obtain their object, so as to make the exclusion of two millions of their countrymen a fundamental article in the union. The demand would be of a nature quite unprecedented. You might obtain the union: and yet a gentleman who, under the new union establishment, would aspire to the honor of representing his county, might

possibly be as much obliged, as he may fear to be, under the old separate establishment, to the unsupportable mortification of asking his neighbors, who have a different opinion concerning the elements in the sacrament, for their votes.

I believe, nay, I am sure, that the people of Great Britain, with or without an union, might be depended upon, in cases of any real danger, to aid the government of Ireland, with the same cordiality as they would support their own, against any wicked attempts to shake the security of the happy constitution in church and state. But before Great Britain engages in any quarrel, the *cause of the dispute* would certainly be a part of her consideration. If confusions should arise in that kingdom, from too steady an attachment to a proscriptive monopolizing system, and from the resolution of regarding the franchise, and, in it the security of the subject, as belonging rather to religious opinions than to civil qualification and civil conduct, I doubt whether you might quite certainly reckon on obtaining an aid of force from hence, for the support of that system. We might extend your distractions to this country, by taking part in them. England will be indisposed, I suspect, to send an army for the conquest of Ireland. What was done in 1782 is a decisive proof of her sentiments of justice and moderation. She will not be fond of making another American war in Ireland. The principles of such a war would but too much resemble the former one. The well-disposed and the ill-disposed in England, would (for different reasons perhaps) be equally averse to such an enterprise. The confiscations, the public auctions, the private grants, the plantations, the transplantations, which formerly animated so many adventurers, even among sober citizens, to such Irish expeditions, and which possibly might have animated some of them to the American, can have no existence in the case that we suppose.

Let us form a supposition (no foolish or ungrounded supposition) that in an age, when men are infinitely more disposed to heat themselves with political than religious controversies, the former should entirely prevail, as we see that in

some places they have prevailed, over the latter; and that the catholics of Ireland, from the courtship paid them on the one hand, and the high tone of refusal on the other, should, in order to enter into all the rights of subjects, all become protestant dissenters; and as the other do, take all your oaths. They would all obtain their civil objects; and the change, for any thing I know to the contrary, (in the dark as I am about the protestant dissenting tenets) might be of use to the health of their souls. But, what security our constitution, in church or state, could derive from that event, I cannot possibly discern. Depend upon it, it is as true as nature is true, that if you force them out of the religion of habit, education, or opinion, it is not to yours they will ever go. Shaken in their minds, they will go to that where the dogmas are fewest; where they are the most uncertain; where they lead them the least to a consideration of what they have abandoned. They will go to that uniformly democratic system, to whose first movements they owed their emancipation. I recommend you seriously to turn this in your mind. Believe that it requires your best and maturest thoughts. Take what course you please—union or no union; whether the people remain catholics or become protestant dissenters, sure it is, that the present state of monopoly *cannot* continue.

If England were animated, as I think she is not, with her former spirit of domination, and with the strong theological hatred which she once cherished for that description of her fellow-christians and fellow-subjects; I am yet convinced, that, after the fullest success in a ruinous struggle, you would be obliged to abandon that monopoly. We were obliged to do this, even when every thing promised success in the American business. If you should make this experiment at last, under the pressure of any necessity, you never can do it well. But if, instead of falling into a passion, the leading gentlemen of the country themselves should undertake the business cheerfully, and with hearty affection towards it, great advantages would follow. What is forced cannot be modified; but here you may measure your concessions.

It is a consideration of great moment, that you make the desired admission without altering the system of your representation in the smallest degree, or in any part. You may leave that deliberation of a parliamentary change or reform, if ever you should think fit to engage in it, uncomplicated and unembarrassed with the other question. Whereas, if they are mixed and confounded, as some people attempt to mix and confound them, no one can answer for the effects on the constitution itself.

There is another advantage in taking up this business, singly, and by an arrangement for the single object. It is that you may proceed by *degrees*. We must all obey the great law of change. It is the most powerful law of nature, and the means perhaps of its conservation. All we can do, and that human wisdom can do, is to provide that the change shall proceed by insensible degrees. This has all the benefits which may be in change, without any of the inconveniences of mutation. Every thing is provided for as it arrives. This mode will, on the one hand, prevent the *unfixing old interests at once:* a thing which is apt to breed a black and sullen discontent, in those who are at once dispossessed of all their influence and consideration. This gradual course, on the other side, will prevent men, long under depression, from being intoxicated with a large draught of new power, which they always abuse with a licentious insolence. But, wishing, as I do, the change to be gradual and cautious, I would, in my first steps, lean rather to the side of enlargement than restriction.

It is one excellence of our constitution, that all our rights of provincial election regard rather property than person. It is another, that the rights which approach more nearly to the personal, are most of them corporate, and suppose a restrained and strict education of seven years in some useful occupation. In both cases the practice may have slid from the principle. The standard of qualification in both cases may be so low, or not so judiciously chosen, as in some degree to frustrate the end. But all this is for your prudence in the

case before you. You may rise, a step or two, the qualification of the catholic voters. But if you were, to-morrow, to put the catholic freeholder on the footing of the most favored forty-shilling protestant dissenter, you know that such is the actual state of Ireland, this would not make a sensible alteration in almost any *one* election in the kingdom. The effect in their favor, even defensively, would be infinitely slow. But it would be healing; it would be satisfactory and protecting. The stigma would be removed. By admitting settled permanent substance in lieu of the numbers, you would avoid the great danger of our time, that of setting up number against property. The numbers ought never to be neglected; because (besides what is due to them as men) collectively, though not individually, they have great property: they ought to have therefore protection; they ought to have security: they ought to have even consideration: but they ought not to predominate.

My dear sir, I have nearly done; I meant to write you a long letter; I have written a long dissertation. I might have done it earlier and better. I might have been more forcible and more clear, if I had not been interrupted as I have been; and this obliges me not to write to you in my own hand. Though my hand but signs it, my heart goes with what I have written. Since I could think at all, those have been my thoughts. You know that thirty-two years ago they were as fully matured in my mind as they are now. A letter of mine to lord Kenmare, though not by my desire, and full of lesser mistakes, has been printed in Dublin. It was written ten or twelve years ago, at the time when I began the employment, which I have not yet finished, in favor of another distressed people, injured by those who have vanquished them, or stolen a dominion over them. It contained my sentiments then; you will see how far they accord with my sentiments now. Time has more and more confirmed me in them all. The present circumstances fix them deeper in my mind.

I voted last session, if a particular vote could be distin-

guished, in unanimity, for an establishment of the church of England *conjointly* with the establishment which was made some years before by act of parliament, of the Roman catholic, in the French conquered country of Canada. At the time of making this English ecclesiastical establishment, we did not think it necessary for its safety, to destroy the former Gallican church settlement. In our first act we settled a government altogether monarchical, or nearly so. In that system, the Canadian catholics were far from being deprived of the advantages or distinctions, of any kind, which they enjoyed under their former monarchy. It is true, that some people, and amongst them one eminent divine, predicted at that time, that by this step we should lose our dominions in America. He foretold that the pope would send his indulgences thither; that the Canadians would fall in with France; would declare independence, and draw or force our colonies into the same design. The independence happened according to his prediction; but in directly the reverse order. All our English protestant colonies revolted. They joined themselves to France; and it so happened that popish Canada was the only place which preserved its fidelity; the only place in which France got no footing; the only peopled colony which now remains to Great Britain. Vain are all the prognostics taken from ideas and passions, which survive the state of things which gave rise to them. When last year we gave a popular representation to the same Canada, by the choice of the landholders, and an aristocratic representation, at the choice of the crown, neither was the choice of the crown, nor the election of the landholders, limited by a consideration of religion. We had no dread for the protestant church, which we settled there, because we permitted the French catholics, in the utmost latitude of the description, to be free subjects. They are good subjects, I have no doubt; but I will not allow that any French Canadian catholics are better men or better citizens than the Irish of the same communion. Passing from the extremity of the west, to the extremity almost of the east; I

have been many years (now entering into the twelfth) employed in supporting the rights, privileges, laws and immunities, of a very remote people. I have not as yet been able to finish my task. I have struggled through much discouragement and much opposition; much obloquy; much calumny, for a people with whom I have no tie, but the common bond of mankind. In this I have not been left alone. We did not fly from our undertaking because the people are mahometans or pagans, and that a great majority of the christians amongst them are papists. Some gentlemen in Ireland, I dare say, have good reasons for what they may do, which do not occur to me. I do not presume to condemn them; but thinking and acting as I have done, towards these remote nations, I should not know how to shew my face, here or in Ireland, if I should say that all the pagans, all the mussulmen, and even all the papists (since they must form the highest stage in the climax of evil) are worthy of a liberal and honorable condition, except those of one of the descriptions, which forms the majority of the inhabitants of the country in which you and I were born. If such are the catholics of Ireland,—ill-natured and unjust people, from our own data, may be inclined not to think better of the protestants of a soil, which is supposed to infuse into its sects a kind of venom unknown in other places.

You hated the old system as early as I did. Your first juvenile lance was broken against that giant. I think you were even the first who attacked the grim phantom. You have an exceeding good understanding, very good humor, and the best heart in the world. The dictates of that temper, and that heart, as well as the policy pointed out by that understanding, led you to abhor the old code. You abhorred it, as I did, for its vicious perfection. For I must do it justice: it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency; well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance; and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement, in them, of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man. It is

a thing humiliating enough, that we are doubtful of the effect of the medicines we compound. We are sure of our poisons. My opinion ever was (in which I heartily agree with those that admired the old code) that it was so constructed, that if there was once a breach in any essential part of it; the ruin of the whole, or nearly of the whole, was, at some time or other, a certainty. For that reason I honor, and shall for ever honor and love you, and those who first caused it to stagger, crack, and gape. Others may finish; the beginners have the glory; and, take what part you please at this hour, (I think you will take the best) your first services will never be forgotten by a grateful country. Adieu! Present my best regards to those I know, and as many as I know in our country, I honor. There never was so much ability, nor, I believe, virtue, in it. They have a task worthy of both. I doubt not they will peform it, for the stability of the church and state, and for the union and the separation of the people: for the union of the honest and peaceable of all sorts; for their separation from all that is ill-intentioned and seditious in any of them.

Beaconsfield, January 3, 1792.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

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